

Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick Library

BS1605 .B639

Blanchard, Charles A. (Charles AIMAIN

An Old Testament gospel : a prophet's me



3 9967 00115 9446

VIRGINIA LIBRARY



McCORMICK
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CHICAGO

826 Belden Avenue



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/bwb_P9-ELZ-336



REV. H. K. J. DE KROON

of Today

BY *Robert*

CHARLES A. BLANCHARD

Author of "Getting Things from God," "Light on the Last Days,"
"Modern Secret Societies," "Visions and Voices;
or Who Wrote the Bible?" etc.

PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE
OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



1508

McCORMICK THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY LIBRARY.
CHICAGO

Chicago

The Bible Institute Colportage Association
826 North La Salle Street

Copyright, 1918
by
The Bible Institute Colportage Association
of Chicago.

ROBERT O. LAW COMPANY
EDITION BOOK MANUFACTURERS
C H I C A G O, U. S. A.

160
B 63

DEDICATION

I am at this time connected with the College Church of Wheaton. I have been a member of it for fifty-five years. I am a member of the Faculty of Wheaton College and have been connected with that teaching body for forty-five years. I am a Director of the National Christian Association, President of the Chicago Hebrew Mission, a Director of the Chicago Tract Society, an honorary Vice-president of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and a Counselor of the Africa Inland Mission.

In these organizations and in others in which I have been associated there are a multitude of true and faithful men and women. I cannot name them all, so I will not name any of them, but I desire to dedicate this child of my heart to these true and tried soldiers of the Holy War.

C. A. B.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

PAGE

How I came to write books—The use which God has seemed disposed to make of them—The special origin of this book—Good news truths as set forth in Jonah—Committing the bark to the waves - - - - - II

CHAPTER I. AN OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL

The word "gospel"—The Bible all gospel—Augustine's statement of this fact—How many gospels are there?—Is Esther a gospel?—God everywhere the loving friend of His people—Certainly the promises of God true if His threatenings are—Even the story of shames and crimes, good news because they show that men have not changed and that God was always merciful - - - - - 15

CHAPTER II. JESUS' BIBLE

The Old Testament the Scriptures of Jesus' time—The only Scriptures He ever knew—The forms of the Old and New Testament differ—The world and the teaching is the same—Human beings today exactly what they have been from the beginning, what they will be to the end—God's hatred of loathsome crimes the same today that it has always been—The New Testament also denounces judgment upon sin—The way of the transgressor hard in spite of the "revised version" 23

CHAPTER III. GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

Strange that this, which is the great fact revealed in Jonah, should be so generally forgotten, and that people should be ever talking about Jonah and "the whale"—Nineveh, a base and ignoble city, yet dear to the heart of God—Nineveh did not care for God, but God cared for Nineveh—Does God love good people or all people?—Was there ever a city worse than Nineveh? It is very doubtful—Should the gospel be preached in every sermon, whatever may be its theme or character?—Preachers very ignorant of the needs of their congregation—God knows what they are, physical suffering and financial difficulties, domestic troubles and spiritual assaults, all represented in every congregation—God follows sinners and saints the way I followed my little child - - 29

CHAPTER IV. JONAH THE SON OF AMITTAI

PAGE

Men choose great men, God chooses those whom He can use—

Jonah a young unknown prophet, yet selected for the greatest mission of his day—The mechanic called to be the pastor of a church—Prayer-meetings about the choice of ushers—Why not have sent Isaiah to Nineveh?—Many men refuse to work because they think they are unable—They are, but God is able and He chooses the weak, the foolish, the ignorant, if they fully choose Him - - - - -

36

CHAPTER V. THE TICKET TO TARSHISH

Not a new thing in the world for a prophet to run away from his work—Many such cases since the time of Jonah—Moses shrunk from his task, so did Jeremiah, so perhaps have you—Giving sons money in place of giving money and sons to God—My Boston friend who threw away thirty thousand dollars—My Illinois friend who threw away a daughter, sending her to a school where there was no Christian faith, destroying her faith—Jonah paid the fare, not all of it at first—No man pays all the fare at first when he runs away from God—Danger of becoming a minister to please a mother—Dangerous places are safe for men whom God sends to them—Safe places are dangerous for men whom God does not send to them—Nineveh the best place in the world for Jonah—Tarshish a poor retreat - - - - -

42

CHAPTER VI. RAIN ON THE MOWN FIELD

God gives men more than one trial—Psalm 72:6 once a mystery to me—Light on it through the preaching of a student—Rain on the stubble, not rain on the cut grass—Age, infirmity, sin, a thousand ways of seeming to be through with one's work—God able to revive lives as well as fields—Second growths—Five or six crops of alfalfa—Mr. Pope's tract for boys and men—Jonah, the greatest evangelist ever known—God still wants them—He needs them in every corner of the world—My deaf friend who wished to go to India

49

CHAPTER VII. FISH UNIVERSITY; OR, GRADUATE COURSES IN DIVINITY

Very little known about Jonah—Probably a student in one of Elisha's schools—Only one message given to him before this message—God prepared the fish—Jonah remained in it for three days and nights—Did he die and was he resurrected?—No such statement made in the Bible—Some think so—Apparently he was alive and conscious—Men would have said "the end of Jonah"; God knew it was the beginning of his great service—Paul Rader's sermon on "How to Lick the Devil"—Jonah learned by his graduate course in Fish Uni-

versity—He did not thereafter doubt God's power to accomplish His purpose—Separation from man, danger and discomfort, elements in the course of this University—All of these helpful—Ease and sensuous pleasures dangers—Poverty, hard work, the hostility of the world, all these help to make the man—Pruning a cruel thing in itself, yet the condition of fruitfulness - - - - -	56
--	----

CHAPTER VIII. THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Schools for preachers but no schools for praying, except the one that Jesus has established—He still offers courses in praying, will take any pupil who wishes to register—Little said about the prayers of Jesus except that He prayed—Prayers in times of difficulty, in times of important work—Prayers before and after preaching, but little or nothing said about what was the subject of His prayers—Different men pray differently—Dr. Stearns of Germantown—George Müller of Bristol, England—Danger of trying to pray like other folks, to be copyists in any way—Jonah's confidence even in the fish—This the great need of God's people now—Paying vows—Vows often unpaid—Resulting failures—Sam Jones' teaching about the certainty of God's share of the work - - - - -	66
---	----

CHAPTER IX. REBUILT MACHINES

A companion chapter to "Rain on the Mown Field"—Rebuilt machines advertised constantly—In some cases excellent machines—Whenever God rebuilds the machine the work well done—"The bird with the broken pinion" might fly as high again, and sing as well, if God mended his wing and inspired the song—The case of Peter—The boy and the nails in the post—Men wish to be saved by works—God never saved any man that way—Works follow salvation and God blesses them, never precede—President Finney's testimony about the churches—The darkness deepens—The needs for Jonahs increased - - - - -	77
--	----

CHAPTER X. HE WENT DOWN INTO THE SHIP

Foolish to attach too much importance to words, yet words repeated have a reason behind them—In Jonah "down" and "prepared"—The human race goes down—Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham's age, the age of the Christian church—Scared prophets too numerous, paralyzed churches as a result—Jesus still loving His church and caring for His church -	89
--	----

CHAPTER XI. MURMURERS AND COMPLAINERS

These not unfortunate people but sinners—The case of Israel—The case of Elijah—The case of Jonah—Strange that these great servants of God should have murmured and com-	
---	--

plained—God does not seem to blame them too much—He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust—When nervous energy has all been expended in the service of God, God is very tender—Care-worn mothers, half-paid preachers, exhausted missionaries—No harshness on the part of God, great gentleness as of a mother with a little child - - - 95

CHAPTER XII. A GREAT REVIVAL

What is a revival?—Where do revivals begin?—Can everyone have a revival when he wants it?—Spiritual contagion—Spiritual anticipations—The Nineveh revival, the greatest in the history of the world—No committees, no processions, no publicity,—just God and a prophet and three-quarters of a million of wicked people—No criticism on modern methods but need for thought—Lightning kills, not thunder—So truth saves, not noise—Law of cause and effect in the spiritual world—“He went down to his house justified” - - - - - 103

CHAPTER XIII. CAN THE HEATHEN BE SAVED?

Nineveh was spared, but did the Ninevites go into Paradise?—God spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by His Spirit, speaks to men thus now—Heathens lost in this world already will remain lost unless saved—Can they be saved without the Bible and the preacher?—Possibly, not probably—The duty of holding forth the Word of life rests upon the divine command—It is also enforced by the results of missionaries—Nineveh was saved by preaching—I hope some of the Ninevites were—I know God wished them to be—If you give your message, God may save your Nineveh - - - - - III

CHAPTER XIV. THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE

Infidelity today objects to the miraculous, therefore to the Bible, which is full of the miraculous, which is itself miraculous—The nations where rationalism has prevailed now seem composed of demonized savages—Professors and teachers who led the church into the apostasy justly chargeable with the horrors of the battlefield—The same men justify the horrors of the battlefield—My friend who believed in salvation, but did not very much believe in the Bible—His wife and his children—Miracles possible, if there is a God—Miracles probable, if He is good—Miracles proved, if the testimony of Jesus is worth anything—Nothing strange about a divine Being working divinely—Nothing strange about an omnipotent Being doing works impossible to men—Quite natural and quite to be expected - - - - - 120

INTRODUCTION

WHEN I wrote my first book I seriously questioned whether it was a wise expenditure of time. I did not feel sure that God would be willing to use my printed testimony as He had been disposed to use that testimony uttered in person. The six little books which He has given me for His people have, however, had a place in the kingdom which I did not dare to anticipate for them.

I scarcely ever give an address away from my home town but that someone comes to me to thank me for some book and thus far the circulation, in place of diminishing with years, seems to increase. I consider it a great privilege and blessing that those feelings which God has given to me in my labors at home and abroad, on my journeyings by land and sea, have been ordained as helps for some of His children, often for some of His children who are suffering.

The messages which make up this volume have now been delivered in a number of cities and con-

ferences. Everywhere God has seemed disposed to make them helpful and I have felt that it was a duty, as well as a privilege, to put them in this form so that when I can no longer speak, this truth may yet be uttered.

I have read what books on Jonah I could find and have found them helpful, notably the series of addresses by Dr. W. B. Riley of St. Paul and by Dr. F. B. Meyer of London. Those who have read these excellent books will, however, see that I have been led in a different way; that the important truths which they have been led to emphasize have been somewhat different from those which have been given to me, so I imagine this book, if it does its own work, will not interfere with the work of others.

JONAH A TYPICAL BOOK

The thought which looms up to me in Jonah is the thought which is impressed by the whole Word of God. It is that here we have good news; good news for sinful men that God loves them, that God thinks of them when they do not think of Him, that God uses men to save them, that God uses men to save other men, that He uses imperfect men, men who are timid and afraid; that God does not cast off those who fail, that He tries them a second, sometimes a third or fourth time; that God is able to

give them the training they need even when it involves most singular and perilous situations; that when men are trained and deliver their message, God gives it power; that one man working with God may in a few days time save hundreds of thousands of people through hundreds of years.

All these facts seem to me clearly taught in this Old Testament prophet and I believe them all to be gospel, every one of them a good news for any man who loves God and hates evil, and so I commit the book to the charity of God's people, and the love and care of the God whose message it seeks to enforce.

An Old Testament Gospel

CHAPTER I

AN OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL

THE word *gospel* is a simple English word which means "good news," or "glad tidings."

We have the word *evangel*, which means the same thing, only it is two Greek words made into English. It means "a good message," the same thought in another form.

When we think of the Bible carelessly we say there are so many books of the law, so many histories, so many prophets, so many gospels and so many epistles, but when we think more accurately we recognize the fact that the Bible is nothing but good news, so far as God's part of it is concerned. There is a background, dark and unlovely, which furnishes the occasion for the good news. Our Lord told us

that the whole did not have need of a physician, but the sick; that He himself did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and the calling of a sinner to repentance with a promise of pardon is the best news that ever yet was furnished to sinful man.

Augustine said many years ago: "The Old Testament is the foundation of the New, and Christ is the center and scope of both. As the New Testament lies hidden in the Old, so the Old Testament lies open in the New." These words were written a great many years ago by a great souled child of God, and they are just as true today as they were then.

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS ONE

The Old Testament is the foundation of the New, the New Testament is built upon the Old. It is packed with quotations from it. The New Testament writers were evidently familiar with the Old Testament. They used it so freely that it is plain that they considered it the foundation of their faith as well as the foundation of their work. On the other hand, the Old Testament lies open in the New. The types and symbols of the Old Testament attain their full spiritual significance when we read them in the light of the New Testament books.

Daniel requires Revelation, Leviticus requires Hebrews, the gospels of the Old Testament require the gospels of the New.

SIXTY-SIX GOSPELS

How many gospels are there? When I was delivering the course of addresses from which this little book has grown, in New York, a gentleman said to me: "I am delighted to find that there are five gospels. I always thought there were only four." I said to him, "Bless your soul, my dear brother, there are sixty-six. There is no portion of God's Word, New or Old Testament, which does not contain, in one form or another, the good news." Let us consider Esther for a moment. When I had made the statement above written in a public meeting, a gentleman said to me: "How about Esther?" From time to time I hear men say that the name of God does not occur in this book. Of course, the name of Jesus does not occur. The plan of salvation is not unfolded. How then can there be good news in Esther?

Esther is a book of the captivity and the dispersion. The people of God, for their sins, had been scattered among their enemies. God told them that they would be and they were. Esther shows that God keeps His word and if He keeps His word

when He threatens, will He not keep His word when He promises good? The Bible nowhere says that God delights in judgment. It says that He delights in mercy, yet the book of Esther teaches us that when He threatens judgment, if His people do not obey, judgments come. They are sure to come. This is good news for anybody who believes that God has a right to rule and wishes Him to do so.

GOD REMEMBERS HIS OWN

The book of Esther also shows that when God's people were in captivity He did not forget them. It gives an account of a diabolical conspiracy against the life of every Jew who was in the domains of Ahasuerus. A plan was laid to slaughter them all. The king had consented, all the agencies for their destruction were at hand, yet God had not forgotten His people. They had sinned against Him. He had punished them. Their enemies wished to destroy them. This book shows that God did not permit it.

The book of Esther shows how marvelously God works. First, there is the drunken feast; then there is the womanly self-respect and pride of Vashti; then she is sent dishonored, so far as men can dishonor a noble woman, out of her husband's house. She disappears like a stone dropped into the sea. We

never hear a word of her again. Then there is the search for the new queen and this search ends with the choice of a Jewess to be the wife of the ruler of the realm.

LINKS IN A CHAIN

Here are links in a chain. The chain goes on. The man who plots the ruin of the Jews is angry with the Jewish official who sits in the gate of the king and who will not do him reverence. This furnishes the immediate occasion for the plot which involves not that man alone but every man of Jewish blood throughout the empire. Then there is the plot against the life of Ahasuerus and the fact that Mordecai, discovering this plot, reveals it to the king. Then comes Haman and the king puts the question to him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?" Why does the king put that question to Haman at that time? Because the night before he could not sleep. The records of the realm were brought and in them he was reminded that Mordecai had saved his life. How did it happen that when the time came for Mordecai to be remembered, Ahasuerus could not sleep? And so the wonderful chain of providences went on. It is marvelous to see how they link in one with another until the enemies of the Jews were

destroyed; the Jews themselves were held in honor by all the people and the queen was confirmed in her position as one of the rulers of the realm.

GOOD NEWS FOR A GOOD MAN

I would like to know what man can read this book and believe it without finding it good news, if he really wishes righteousness to triumph in this world and evil to be overthrown. It is quite possible that there is yet a deeper significance than has been mentioned, in certain of these events.

Esther did not have to give up her life to save her people, but she was compelled to risk it. When she agreed to the plan of Mordecai she said, "I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." Here as always, death is the fountain out from which life springs. Desiring to save others she was not able to save herself. She laid down her life in spirit and purpose for her people and thus she saved her people and this is the work that Jesus has done, is doing, and will yet do.

It would be easy to show that God, everywhere throughout the world, is the friend of His people. All those who belong to Him are naturally rejoiced when they see that this is so. All those who do not belong to Him are naturally led to fear when they

find that God has the power, the disposition and the purpose to rule. It is a blessed thing for a man to be afraid to sin, afraid to live without God.

It is a fearful thing for a man to doubt that the threatenings and the promises of God are true. If this infidelity gets possession of the mind of man, no one can tell to what depths of ignominy he may fall and, on the other hand, when this faith in God takes full possession of a human being, there is no limit that can be set to his upward striving. Beginning with the fear that he cannot do anything, he ends with the confidence that he can do all things that he needs to do, and so he goes from strength to strength and from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of God.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE FOR?

Let us, therefore, lay down as a fundamental principle this statement, that the Bible is God's Book, intended for the salvation, sanctification and glorification of His people; that those who believe it, obey it and walk in its light will be saved from falling and saved to serve in the kingdom of God. We should, therefore, have this thought in mind whenever we take into our hands the holy Word of God. This is God's Word. It is intended for the blessing of all men. It is packed with good news.

It is all good news. There is nothing in it, not even the accounts of the shames and crimes of men, which seen in its relations does not bring glory to God and hope to men. This book shows that righteousness will triumph, that evil doers will be overthrown, that patience and perseverance in the divine way will bring about the glory of God and the joy and satisfaction of human beings. So we are to rest and rejoice as we open the book.

CHAPTER II

JESUS' BIBLE

THE book of Jonah is not only interesting to us because it is a gospel, because it contains an evangel, but it is interesting to us, further, because it is a part of the only Bible which Jesus ever knew. Those who speak lightly of the Old Testament, who say that the New Testament is quite sufficient for us now, probably have not thought much of the fact that this book is the only Bible that Jesus ever held in His holy hands. The rolls of the law, the rolls of the prophets and the rolls of the Psalms were in the synagogues. They were in the synagogue at Nazareth, some or all of them. Jesus heard them read when He was a little boy. He was so familiar with the topics treated that when He was twelve years old, being in the temple at Jerusalem, He listened to the doctors and asked them questions, and men were astonished at His understanding and His answers.

The New Testament gives an account of Jesus' life on earth, the founding of the churches, the

letters to the churches, and the revelation which furnishes light for the last days, these days in which we live, but this book was not begun until years after Jesus had been crucified, dead and buried, risen and ascended to be in the heavens.

I like to speak of the Old Testament as Jesus' Bible. When He said: "Search the scriptures," He was saying to His disciples: "Search the Old Testament." Undoubtedly if the New Testament had been written He would have told them to search that, but it was not written so He told them to search the Bible which He himself searched, in which He Himself was trained.

BOTH TESTAMENTS ONE IN SPIRIT

I do not like to hear people say that the spirit of the New Testament differs from the spirit of the Old. It is true that the Old Testament is more largely historical than the New, and it is true that the history of the Old Testament, being an honest history and a truthful one, contains many things which it is hard for us to read. So does any truthful narrative of human life. There are tens of thousands of good men and women now who find it hard to read the record of things which are done in the world war, but as some one has said, "Though

there are forty ways of putting out a fire, winking is not one of them."

If the Holy Spirit had not led holy men to write in Jesus' Bible accounts of shameful, criminal transactions, the book would not have been truthful, as a record of the times; just as a book, written now, which should not contain an account of outrages on old men, women and children, outrages so dastardly that we almost hate ourselves because we know them, would be a very imperfect record of these days in which we live.

HUMAN NATURE DOES NOT CHANGE

I was talking with a missionary recently about the White Wolf raid in Western China. One cannot write for general reading the report which he gave me of that carnival of crime. No more can one write for general reading an account of the things which are done under the teaching and by the authority of the most scientific and so-called cultured nation of the world. In private conversation or in books for personal reading we have a small part of these horrors revealed and we find that they are very like the Old Testament.

Why should one then say that the Old Testament belonged to the savage age, that the God of the Old Testament was a cruel and unreasonable person

when we find in this very day nations which have had the advantage of thousands of years of books and schools, doing exactly the same things which the Word of God declares to have been done in those early days of the world's history.

NOR DOES GOD CHANGE

As God hated those loathsome crimes then, so undoubtedly He hates them now, and as God punished them then, so beyond all question He will punish them now, and as God in those days had compassion on all sinners who were sorrowful for their sins, so beyond doubt He has compassion in these days for all sinners who are sorrowful for their sins, and as God then would not acquit the guilty but sent disease, death and ruin upon them, so in our time God will not acquit the guilty but will send death and ruin upon them.

It is also to be observed that in the New Testament, which some persons think so far superior to the Old in gentleness and loving kindness, we have the plainest teaching respecting the judgment of the lost, that there is in the whole Bible. Jesus' Bible shows that sin was punished but Jesus' personal teachings show that sin is to be punished in a lake of fire. This is an expression which does not occur in the Old Testament at all, it indicates not

that God had become more merciful when the New Testament was written than He was when Jesus' Bible was written but that He has the same hatred for sin and the same determination to punish it in the severest manner possible.

THE "WHY" OF JUDGMENT

It is also very interesting to know that in the New Testament the ground of judgment is more plainly set forth than it is in the Old. Inferentially we may find the truth in Jesus' Bible, but it is explicitly set forth in the Bible which tells the story of Jesus. Sin is offensive to God in proportion to the light and privilege of the sinner. One who has little light is punished with few stripes as compared with the same sort of sinner who has much light. Rewards for righteous people differ, so do penalties for wicked people. The sinner who transgresses the law of God in our time will be held to a much more rigid reckoning than one who sinned in the time of Paul or in the time of Abraham. When we reflect upon it we can see that this is just and right and that it is precisely as it ought to be, and this fact has a bearing on the theory that the Old Testament is savage and cruel while the New Testament is filled with loving kindness. Both are filled with loving kindness, but both show that the transgres-

sion of God's law works evil and only evil and that continually. Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death; in the Old Version or the Revised Version; in the Old Testament or in the New Testament; in the book of Genesis or in the book of John. As one has said: "The way of the transgressor is hard notwithstanding the revision."

CHAPTER III

"GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD"

THE outstanding fact in the book of Jonah is seldom even named. A large number of comparatively unimportant matters are dealt with by students, but the great fundamental truth which looms up from the first to the last of this wonderful book is almost never mentioned, at least this is the truth so far as my own hearing and reading have enabled me to judge.

What is the great mountain fact revealed in this book? It is the fact that God loved Nineveh. Now what was Nineveh? One of the old world capitals, so full of vices, cruelties and crimes that its story cannot be read in decent society without expurgation and long silences. This vicious, loathsome capital knew nothing about God,—that is, the true God. It was filled up with follies, gods of one kind and another that men had invented, just as men invent gods now for the idolatrous temples which they erect in Boston, Chicago and San Francisco; but the true God was a stranger to those people and so far as the record reveals the facts, they were entirely

willing that He should remain so. We have no reason to believe that one Ninevite cared whether God was alive or dead. We have not the slightest reason to believe that one Ninevite was earnestly seeking to know what was right and to do it.

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

The city, so far as we are informed by history, either sacred or profane, was a wicked, godless, wretched city, but the book of Jonah has for its foundation stone and for its capstone as well, the love of God for this miserable people. They did not think about Him but He thought about them. They did not care for Him but He cared for them and calling upon one of His young prophets, He said to him, "Go to Nineveh, and deliver to it the message that I give thee." From this initial step to the end, when that whole city sat in sack-cloth and ashes, the cattle lowing, the horses neighing, the sheep bleating and the people crying out because of their sins, this is the great fundamental fact. God was interested in Nineveh and God maintained His interest in Nineveh and stayed by His purpose to save Nineveh until the work was done.

HE RECEIVES SINNERS

When I was a boy, good people who did not know any better used to tell me that if I would be good

God would love me, but that if I were naughty, God would be angry with me. In a way and in a sense this was true and is true still, but in the impression produced, it was not at all true. I came to believe that God loved good people and hated wicked ones, whereas the fact is, that God loved the world and that He loves the world; that He loved the world so much that He gave Jesus to die that the world might be saved without destroying the foundations of His government, and since He is the changeless one, He loves the world today precisely as He did then.

Choose out the most infamous and abandoned city you can think of and ask yourself whether it is worse than Nineveh was. Choose out the most abandoned and wretched man or family that you know of, and ask yourself whether or not this man or family are worse than the people of Nineveh. I think you will be compelled to admit, when you have made your search, that Nineveh was lost and that people nowadays are lost and that but for the goodness of God they would remain lost to the ages of the ages and, if you believe the book of Jonah to be true, then you will believe that God either loves wicked people now or else He has changed His character. If you believe that Nineveh was spared when Nineveh repented, you will believe that wicked

people now who repent will be spared and you will have courage and confidence, if you are really caring for people, to preach the gospel of forgiveness and pardon to all men who are willing to forsake their sins.

ALWAYS INVITE THE UNSAVED

I read some while ago, in the writing of a certain preacher, that he determined that he would never preach a sermon in which there was not truth enough to save an anxious sinner, if he should be present. I think this was a sensible thing for a preacher to do. When I read that statement, I adopted it for myself and while I have failed many times to live out my purpose as fully as I ought, I have really tried whenever permitted to speak to people in the name of Jesus, to show anybody present who was willing to let go of sin, that God was willing to take him into His heart.

How little we know about the needs of congregations. Only this week I was preaching, and before I left the church a lady came to tell me that her daughter had gone astray and that she was living the life of a public prostitute. She had prayed for her, remonstrated with her, done all that she knew for her and still her daughter would not listen, would not turn. A little while after a lady came to me to

say that her father had left her about half a million dollars; that she had thought she would like to go to China as a missionary, as she had plenty of means and income, without being a tax on any one; that she had gone to China, that she had spent six and a half years there, getting the language and teaching the people; that the trustees of her property in this country squandered or stole almost all of it, and when she came back to look after her matters, she found herself almost, if not quite, a beggar.

THIS IS A BURDENED WORLD

These two burdens had only been rolled on my heart when a lady came to speak of her husband who was dying of cancer, a believer but a sufferer, and so the messages went on. If only the hearts of men could be unveiled, the messages would go on until I think we ourselves would find our hearts breaking under the load of men's suffering. This is the world today, and this is the best part of the world too, and these are the needs which press upon people. Not the only ones, not the greatest ones, but some of the needs. Ought not we who preach, when we speak to congregations made up of people like these, not one of them known to us but all of them suffering in some way and all of them dear to the heart of God, ought we not to speak to them in

such a way that they shall clearly see that God loves them, that He is planning for them, that He is caring for them and that if they are willing and will be obedient, He will, in due time, appear for their help.

I have spoken in another book of an event which occurred in my own home many years ago. Though it will be old to some who read, I repeat it here because it has a bearing on the truth which I am seeking to impress.

GOD FOLLOWS HIS CHILDREN

About two o'clock in the morning, one of my children, a little girl of three years, asked me for a drink of water. There was no drinking water in our room. I told her that she must wait until morning, that we had no water in our room, and that I did not wish to go down. She lay quiet for a moment longer and said, "Papa, I want a drink." Thinking to quiet her by diverting her mind and calling for action on her part, I said to her, "All right, go down and get it. I do not wish to go." To my surprise the little thing immediately slipped out of bed and started down stairs. Curious to know what she would do and anxious that she should not be frightened or harmed, I quietly stepped out of bed and followed her. Down the stairs she went and after her I followed, through the hall and to

the door of the dining room. Half way across the dining room and then the darkness seemed to crowd in upon her baby soul and she began to cry. I did not have to take a step. I simply stooped, put my arms around the little thing, and said to her, "You need not be afraid, father is here."

I love to think that in exactly this fashion God is following every man, woman and child who will read these words. They do not hear His footfall, they do not see His face, the marvelous light does not break in upon their human understandings, nevertheless God loves them and cares for them and is near them and when they need, if they will send out their cry He will put forth His hand to help.

Yes, indeed it is a blessed fact that God loved Nineveh, that God loves all the people who come into our churches, that God loves all the wicked people in heathen cities and all the wicked heathen people in cities of Christian lands, that He thinks about them, that He desires to do them good, that from time to time He sends messengers to them and that if they listen and obey them, they will be saved.

CHAPTER IV.

JONAH, THE SON OF ĀMITTAI

I SOMETIMES hear people planning for great meetings for the accomplishing of large things.

A church debt is to be raised, or a subscription is to be taken for some important work, or there is to be an effort for a revival, and good men and women sit down to talk over the plans, to decide on the helpers whom they will seek. Too many times the conversation runs something like this: "Now we have quite a big work, we must get a big man. We want somebody who will not alienate or irritate people, we want somebody who will attract and draw. This man will not do, he is too plain-spoken. This other man will not do, he is not sufficiently reined in his manner. This other man will not do, he is not sufficiently learned, but here is a man who is very learned. He is very eloquent, he is very popular, he has done big things. If we can get him, he will be the man."

THE WEAK THINGS OF THE WORLD

A gentleman was telling me the other day about the way he was called to his first church. He was a mechanic. He had had little general education and no ministerial training whatever, but he had been empowered by the Spirit to do work for the souls of men, and some of the people in the church, which was without a pastor, thought of him. Several other candidates were before them, men who had had much larger training, men who had had much more experience. It would have been quite natural that someone of these others should have been selected, but after a prayer-meeting lasting until midnight and beyond, it was the general feeling among the leading members of the church, who were present, that this mechanic was the man whom they should call to be their pastor.

Their decision becoming known, a former pastor, a good man, a man of faith, said to them, "You are making a great mistake. You will destroy the church. That man has no fitness for your work. You must get a man who can do the work better." They were sufficiently influenced by his judgment to call another prayer-meeting. They called it, the people assembled, and again they prayed for half the night or more, and at the end of the prayer-meeting it was the feeling of those present that this

mechanic was the one whom God had appointed to be their pastor. They called him. He came, and for all the years of his service streams of salvation were flowing through that church. Hardly a week passed but that someone was born into the kingdom of God, and when he left the church he left it strong and vigorous, filled with the Spirit of God.

GOD SELECTS HIS MESSENGERS

I was talking with a friend recently, who told me about the way some people selected pastors. He said that Paul Rader once remarked in his hearing. "We do not choose an usher in our church without prayer." How wise this is! How many an usher, by ill manners and lack of sympathy has alienated needy souls from the house of God.

I have reminded you of these things which you know as well as I because they have a bearing on this wonderful book. Jonah was a young prophet from Galilee. Galilee was not a place where prophets generally were raised. In the Sanhedrin one of the wise men said: "Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (John 7:52). But Jonah was a prophet of Gath-hepher. We know that this was his home and we know the name of his father. He was the son of Amittai. We do not know anything about Amittai, except that he was the

father of Jonah. He never earned for himself any place in the public mind which would have led us to expect a prophet from his house.

This young prophet, Jonah from Gath-hepher in Galilee, this son of Amittai, so far as we know, had been used prior to this time in only one service. In 2 Kings 14:25 we are told that he was sent to a king with a message, and that he went and delivered it. This is all we know about him except what is recorded in this book and the references which are based upon it.

Jonah is supposed to have been contemporary with Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet of the court. He was associated with great men and had the culture and training which such environment would naturally bring. Here was a great city which was to be evangelized. If you had been selecting your messenger, which one of these two men would you have selected? Would you have called Jonah and sent him to Nineveh, the capital city of an empire, full of palaces, of theatres, of temples, of wealth and wicked men, or would you have chosen Isaiah? I think there is no doubt but that you would have chosen Isaiah. I am rather inclined to think it would have been your duty to do so, because we human beings have so small an opportunity of judging the qualifications of men for tasks, but God selected

Jonah. He said to Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet of Galilee, "Go thou to Nineveh, and preach to it the preaching that I bid thee."

A COMFORT TO THE WEAK

John Wesley says: "There are more persons ruined by despondency than by presumption." I am inclined to think that this is true, that more persons fail to do large work which God would be willing to do through them because they doubt themselves, their powers, their aptitudes, than fail because of self-conceit. There are men who fail because of the latter reason. I have been acquainted with Christian workers who seemed to find it impossible to talk about anyone or anything but themselves, even when they have the unspeakable privilege of preaching God's Word, they take more time in talking of themselves than they do about the Word of God. This has always seemed to me a mystery. It still seems to me a mystery. I think these men are seldom used for large service. Sometimes they are. They are so sincere and so humble that though their minds rest upon themselves almost exclusively, they nevertheless do teach the way of salvation to others and others, learning the way, are saved.

There is, however, no doubt but that the humility which naturally belongs to one who is not highly

esteemed among men, is a better preparation for large work than the pride and self-sufficiency which too frequently accompanies success.

So if these words are read by a man or woman who would like to do some good work for God, and who has been hindered from faith and effort because he is from Galilee, because he is of Gath-hepher, because his father is an unknown man, because he himself has never been used for any large service, let him take courage from the facts which are before him. It was Jonah, the son of Amittai, who was sent to Nineveh. It was not Isaiah, nor Jeremiah, nor Ezekiel, nor Daniel, but Jonah; and if God could and did employ him for the largest evangelistic service which has ever been rendered by one man in the same length of time, during the history of the world, why should He not use the humble, perhaps discouraged, downhearted man who is reading this chapter on Jonah, the son of Amittai?

CHAPTER V

THE TICKET TO TARSHISH

IT is not a new thing in the history of the world that a man should shrink from a task which an angel might desire. It is not a new thing in the history of the world that a man should shrink from a task which he himself desires. I think there are few men, called to large service, who do not tremble as they bend to their task. It would really be a reason for doubting their call if it were otherwise. So, in this case, while we do not find the arguments set forth as in certain cases, we find a prompt disobedience. Moses argued the case with God. So also did Jeremiah. Jonah simply ran away. He does not seem, so far as the record is concerned, to have objected at all. He simply started for the seaside, found a ship going a thousand miles west, when he had been ordered to go six or seven hundred miles east and, arranging for passage, he sailed out into the deep. He had not gone far on this rebellious road before difficulties began. The tempest arose and the ship could not make progress. The

superstitious seamen were afraid. They cried to their gods. They wanted Jonah to cry to his God, and before the events had reached their culmination, he told them the facts regarding his journey. He not only did this, but he told them how the difficulties in which they were involved might be avoided, how they might secure a fair sea and a favoring wind.

PRONOUNCING ONE'S OWN SENTENCE

In general he seems to have been a very honest, sincere, straight-forward young prophet. "Take me up, and cast me into the sea," he said, "and it will become quiet to you." They did as he told them to do and went their way, while he went his way.

I was talking with a gentleman recently who told me that he had an unsaved son for whom he wished I would pray. He said that this son had been in business, that he had himself given him thirty thousand dollars and that all of it had been squandered and the boy had finally come back to him to live. He said, "I have taken him into my business, and I am trying to do for him but he is not saved and I am afraid of what may result." I said to the poor father, "Before you gave that thirty thousand dollars to your boy did not the Holy Spirit tell you not to do it?" He said, "Yes, He did, but my wife

thought I ought to do it. She thought that showing confidence in the boy might help him, so I gave the money to him, and now it is gone and he is starting again, and I am trying to help him as well as I can."

TAKING LARGE RISKS

A little while ago I was in a home where there was a bright, fine looking young lady, the daughter of the home. I had never seen the family before, though I knew the father well, having been with him in meetings repeatedly. I entered into conversation with the young lady and found that she was studying in an institution which is notably unfaithful to the Word of God. I questioned her a little about her own faith, respecting the Bible, and found that she had no confidence in it as a revelation from God, though she thought it was a good book to study as literature. I said to the family, in as kindly and inoffensive manner as I could use, that it was very dangerous. It seems to me so still. I shall be astonished if that young lady, raised in a Christian home, her father a minister and an excellent man, a real Bible Christian and Bible believer, is not hopelessly wrecked either in character or faith, or both.

I knew another man, an excellent character, a man of most marked powers as a preacher, who sent his

sons to just such a school. The result has been what might have been anticipated. They have not the faith of their father. The most Christian of them once said to me that he had not the faith of his father. Why should he have? His father, at the time when he should have been going to Nineveh with his son, was going to Tarshish.

There are at this time multitudes of Protestant fathers and mothers who send their daughters to convents for education. These girls, at times, come out earnest and happy Christians. I fear that this is not the common result. The ticket to Tarshish involves expenses which are not named at the time when the ticket is purchased.

WHAT WAS THE FARE TO TARSHISH?

Jonah did not anticipate further charges after he had secured his transportation and went down into the ship. He thought that the fare was paid, but the fare was not paid. There were assessments and arrearages which he had to settle. Before he got through with the purchase of that ticket he had a voyage which he did not anticipate and which changed the course of his life.

How many young people there are who are called, but who refuse the call; who are sent, but who refuse to go; who are missionaries by divine appointment,

but not missionaries by free choice and actual service and, on the other hand, how sometimes persons who are not called to a service enter upon it because of the entreaties of men. Most of the ministers who have preached in the churches where I have worshiped have been good men. There was, however, one man who preached for us for a time who became a drunkard, a gambler, I think an adulterer. At all events his home was, as I remember, broken up.

After he had left the gospel ministry some one said to him, "Why did you go into the ministry?" and he replied, "I never wanted to. I became a minister to please my mother. She thought I ought to be a minister and to gratify her I studied, was ordained and began to preach, but I never was *called* and I never had any peace or comfort in the work."

I have not seen him for many years. The last time I saw him he was going into a smoking car, smoking a cigar at the time and, I was told, though I did not see it, that he spent most of his time going to and from the city in that car playing cards with a group of godless men.

NO SAFE WAY BUT GOD'S WAY

The only safe thing for Jonah to do, when he is sent to Nineveh, is to go to Nineveh, and the only **safe** thing for my reader to do is to go where God

sends him. It may be over a long, hard road, to a wicked, dangerous city, with a hard, unpleasing message. Nevertheless, if God has sent him, God has given him the message and his only safety is to obey and go.

Human wisdom is never sufficient for managing human life. I do not care how wise you are, you are not wise enough to determine your own best course. God who made us and who knows all the circumstances in which we are to be involved, all the providences in which we are to have a part, is the one and the only one who can select for us the work which we ought to do.

Men say to me sometimes, "Well, I ought to have done so and so, but I did not and now it is too late." I am sure that sometimes this is true, that God, having sent Jonah to Nineveh and he, having purchased his ticket for Tarshish, is dismissed from divine service and must find the rest of his way along as best he can. I am equally sure that there are cases, many cases, in which the man who has refused the call of God on one occasion, finds that God is still ready to use him on another. The great question is whether or not, after he has made his mistake and realizes it, he is willing, humbly and quietly to do the next thing to which he is called by the Spirit, in the providence of God. If he is, then he may

find, as Jonah did, that God will say to him the second time, "Go thou to Nineveh, and preach to it the preaching that I bid thee." And the very trials, difficulties and dangers into which he has brought himself by his disobedience, may make him more effective in his work and make his message more effective among the people.

CHAPTER VI

RAIN ON THE MOWN FIELD

I HAVE mentioned the fact that God sometimes, I am inclined to think many times, gives a second trial to persons who have failed at first. It is a great blessing that He does this. It would be very sad for most of us if it were not true. This expression, "rain on the mown grass," which is found in Psalm 72:6, was a great puzzle to me when I was a boy. My father was a farmer's son and though all his life a professional man, was interested in land, horses, cows, and so on. He always owned some property of this kind and was very judicious in his care for it. Thus raised, I learned early how farmers dreaded rain on grass which was cut,—their great effort being to get the grass cured and in the stack or in the barn before rain should fall. Accordingly, I wondered what the Spirit meant when He said that Jesus Christ was to come down like rain on the mown grass.

My first help on this text was from one of my students, who preached a sermon on this text at one

time that instantly removed my difficulty and made the verse stand forth in a beautiful and helpful light. He said that it was not the grass which made the hay upon which Jesus Christ came down like rain, but the stubble which was left in the field, after the hay had been carried away. Then at once the whole beautiful truth flashed upon my mind. Jesus Christ comes into human lives that are stubble-fields and refreshing, moistening, vivifying, gives new harvests where hope of harvest had gone. He said to Jonah again the second time, "Go thou to Nineveh."

DIFFERENT WAYS OF ENDING USEFULNESS

There are various ways in which men seem to come to the end of their usefulness. At times sin, into which men fall, seems to terminate lives which have been marked by large and blessed service. The field seems reaped. There have been harvests but they are gone. Now there is nothing but hard stubble, oftentimes in a dry field, under a burning sky. The poor soul says to himself, "There is nothing before me but this arid waste; yet, if He let him, Jesus Christ will come down into His life like rain upon the stubble-field. The rain on the stubble-field brings forth a new growth, fresh, green and beautiful. Another harvest may go from the field, or scores of cattle may fatten in it. There is no

difficulty, if only the heart is humble and obedient.

Sometimes the field seems reaped by old age. The time of service has been long and the fruitage has been large, but there seems to be no further strength or courage for service. This is often times the case with ministers, sometimes with missionaries who have done large service for God but whose strength is weakened in the way and who have come to feel that all that they can do is done. I think it would help such persons to remember that God has always a work for every willing worker. Sometimes his work is of one sort and sometimes it is of another, but always there is a work.

WORK CHANGES BUT GOES ON

Naturally and necessarily our labors change with time. We do not have to do at fifty the task which we were called upon to perform at twenty-five. We do not have to toil at seventy-five at tasks which we might joyfully enter upon at fifty, but God, who has made all men and who has His plan for all men, has as real a work and as blessed a work for the man of seventy-five as He has for the man of twenty-five. Sometimes God continues to old age a man in one line of service and sometimes the service changes, but always there is work.

I wish that this thought might come to be a vital

force in the life of every one who reads these words, for it is a dreary thing for one to sit by, waiting for something to happen and since God has never made this necessary but has always given us something to do for every day, it seems a pity that anyone should be sad at heart and desolate in his service because he does not distinguish the purpose of God concerning him.

"And the Lord said to him again the second time." Moses at forty thought that he was to be the deliverer of his people, yet he was not prepared for the work. He did not have sufficient patience and forbearance and gentleness. He required forty years as a shepherd in the mountains before he could efficiently perform the great task which God had assigned him. But when the time came and he was prepared, he began to make excuses. He said, "I cannot do it. I am not eloquent. If I should undertake this I should probably lose my life," and God had patiently and for a long time to argue with him before he was ready for his task.

There seems to be a period of isolation and separation needed for any child of God before he is fit for a large task. Thus when God was sending Elijah to turn the hearts of the children of Israel He told him to go and hide by a brook and after that he became the guest, some would say a dependent, upon a poor widow woman.

When Paul was being equipped for his great service he went into Arabia and was there three years. No one knows just what he was doing. Men speculate upon this still. When our Lord was beginning His great task He took forty days in the wilderness to battle with the tempter and to prepare for His heavy task, but no matter what the reason may be, if we have accomplished one work and if we imagine that this is all we have to do, we ought to take courage from the lesson which is before us.

One reason why people are disposed to give up and let go is, because they think they must do a certain work in a certain way. This is never the case. God can accomplish a good end through many agencies or by using one agent in many ways, if He pleases. The essential thing is to be ready to do His work in His way, in His time, with glad and thankful hearts.

GREAT NEEDS AND GREAT WORKS

I heard Rev. H. W. Pope once say that the way to do great things was to see something which greatly needed to be done, which nobody else was doing, and to go at it with all your heart. He illustrated this teaching from his own life. He said that at one time he was greatly worried because he could not get a tract, such as he wanted, for boys or young

men. He tried his best to secure it and utterly failed. There was no such tract, there was no one who was willing to write such a tract, and finally, being pressed in Spirit, he went to work and made the tract himself. He said that the first edition of the tract was one hundred and thirty-five thousand; that it had been translated into a number of languages and had been used wonderfully of God for the helping of the class for whom it was desired.

This is one illustration. There are many. I am simply seeking to urge upon the thought of all readers the fact that Jesus Christ is perfectly able to put into large and effective service, men and women who by reason of age or infirmity or folly or even sin, imagine that they are through with their work.

Jonah might almost have been excused if, vomited up by the fish on the side of the sea, he had felt that there was nothing more for him to do, but instead of so doing he gave himself cheerfully to the task to which he was called, after his deliverance from danger, and thus giving himself to his work, God blessed him so signally that he became the greatest evangelist known to human history up to the present time.

HAS TO USE ANY ONE HE CAN GET

God is wanting helpers. He needs them in every part of the world. He needs them for all sorts of

work and He will use those who are willing to be employed.

I think I have somewhere told the world of a dear lady fifty years old or more, stone-deaf, who was determined to go to India as a missionary. She had independent means, so she did not have to ask to be sent. The only question was whether somebody would let her work, for she sent herself. In the farewell meeting which was held in our church she said this: "I suppose it seems like insanity to you people to see a woman of my age and my infirmities going out as a missionary, but the fact is that in these days God has to work with most anybody He can get." It is literally true. God has to work with most anybody He can get. Most persons are so busy about other things that they have no time to listen to His call, no disposition to enter upon His service. I mean, the particular call and the particular service which He has for them. Of course, many of them are very good people who want to do good and will do good, but they do not wish to do the good that God has appointed them and do not do it. God calls them the first time, the second time, sometimes the third time or the fourth time, and still Nineveh never sees them.

CHAPTER VII

FISH UNIVERSITY; OR, GRADUATE COURSES IN DIVINITY

I HAVE already remarked that we know very little about Jonah. His name, his home, his father's name, his message to Jeroboam the Second and his revival in Nineveh, these are all that we know of him, but there is one great fact connected with his life that, like all the other facts in it, will be of help to all those who heed.

Jonah had probably been a student in one of the schools of the prophets which Elisha conducted. This is not certain, but it is not at all impossible. There were forty or fifty of these young men gathered at various centers, receiving instruction qualifying them for their work. There is every reason for supposing that he was a sincere man, disposed to be useful in his place; but to preach in a great city of three-quarters of a million of inhabitants, in a manner to produce results and secure convictions and conversions, was no light task and since God had called him to this work He proposed to fit him

for it. He even used the efforts which he made to get away from the work to prepare him to do it. That is a marvelous thing and it is or should be a great encouragement to all people who really desire to do the work of God.

"In human works, though labored on with pain
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain.
In God's each motion can its end produce
And still serve second to some other use."

This is a blessed truth. The very effort that Jonah made to get away from his work led him to the place where God intended to complete his education.

GOD PREPARES FOR US

He had prepared a great fish. This fish was near at hand when Jonah was plunged into the sea. The fish swallowed him and for three days and nights he remained in him, alive and apparently conscious. At the end of these days, having learned his lesson and become ready for his work, God had him vomited forth on the side of the sea, and started him toward Nineveh, the place where he was to do his work, for which work he was now prepared.

In our days there is a great insistence on the education of the ministry and there is no question but that the minister has a task to perform which calls

for the best training which men can receive. The difficulty with much of our modern ministerial education, however, is that it is not the sort of education which God employs when He is calling men to large service.

If one of us had stood by and watched this series of events, we would have said, when Jonah went into the mouth of the fish, "That is the end of Jonah." The fact is, it was not the end of Jonah, but the beginning of his largest service and, furthermore, it is probably the fact that without that particular course of training, he could never have continued the great task which he performed at all.

A WONDER-WORKING GOD

If the young men who are in our theological seminaries could be trained somehow to believe in a God who can raise the dead and who calls the things which are not as though they were, they would be far better fitted than now for the impossible tasks which they have to perform. These men must go into little towns and big towns and country churches. They must meet the hard, cold unbelief which has ruined the world. They must not be discouraged when there is everything to discourage them. They must not be defeated when they have been beaten

again and again. They must learn never to be defeated but always to triumph in Christ Jesus.

Paul Rader, in one of the sermons which he preached in the Inter-Ocean Building, Chicago, a year or two ago, told us that he was going to show young men how to "lick the devil." Some would not phrase the thing in exactly that manner, but that is precisely the thing that needs to be done. That is what Jonah had to learn to do. He had to learn how to beat Satan in Nineveh, the place to which he was called, and every young minister and old minister, must learn to "lick the devil" in the place to which he is called: India, Africa, Korea, China, Turkey, New Orleans, San Francisco, or New York, no matter where, we are called to beat Satan in the place where we are.

FURNISH THE GOODS

Now the education which fits a man to do this thing is the education which the minister requires and it is the only education which will be of any special value to him.

Of course, after Jonah had lived three days and three nights in the belly of the fish and then had been returned to the walks of living men, he had no doubt whatever about the power of God to do miracles. He could after that scarcely have doubted

the power of God to change the hearts of the Ninevites, even if he had wished to do so. He was in all probability so humble that he had really a desire to do for Nineveh what God wanted him to do and that he believed it was possible to do.

This was the object of his graduate course in divinity and this should be the object of all graduate courses in divinity and this *is* the object of graduate courses in divinity so far as those who conduct them know what they are about. When the thought of the teacher is simply to have a large salary, pleasant surroundings, congenial associates and an easy time, that is one thing, but when his eager desire is to see men saved and see men become saviours of other men and to help those who desire to do this work, in some way to undertake it, then he is in a way ready for the high and holy task of training men to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

These courses which prepare men for their work are, as I have already intimated, frequently those which involve isolation. Somehow it seems necessary for a man who wishes to know much about God to get apart from men. Jesus once said to his disciples, "Come ye apart, and rest a while." This was good advice, for it was a busy time and they were all weary, but it was valuable for another reason. When they had gone away from men they had a

chance to listen to God. It was when Moses went to the back side of the desert, a long distance from the tents and the folds, that he saw the burning bush and heard the voice of God. It was when Elijah was in the cave, when the rocks were rent, when the tempests blew, when the lightnings flashed and when the still small voice spoke, that he became acquainted with the plan of God.

ALONE WITH GOD

So Jonah, in the belly of the fish, had an opportunity for acquaintance with God which he could never have had if he had remained among the cities and villages of Galilee. Men, even good men, would have hindered him from his divine training. He needed to be alone.

Another fact about the courses in Fish University is, that they frequently involve the element of danger. We are likely not only to be confused by men, but if we attend to them we are likely to be corrupted by ease-loving and place-seeking. I imagine there are comparatively few men used for large service who do not first or last have to confront situations in which their lives are really in peril. Our great evangelists have, many of them, been in such situations. They have oftentimes been compelled to choose between what seemed likely to be

fatal assault and infidelity to God. Dangers as well as isolations are helpful to those who are called to large service in the kingdom of God. As loneliness makes the heart reach out after someone who can always be at hand, so danger makes the heart reach out after someone who is always sufficient for the need and whether the danger be more active or passive, whether it be, for example, from starvation, or freezing, or of death by assault of assassin, there is always help to a holy man in going into a situation where he will feel that God alone can do for him the thing that needs to be done.

MIRACLES EASY TO GOD

The course of nature for Jonah would have been to be suffocated, then to be attacked by the gastric juice, then to have come into the circulation of the whale and thereafter to have been unknown among the habitations of men. There was nobody to help Jonah except God. I will not say that a well equipped fishing craft might not have delivered him, by killing the fish in a short time and delivering him from his confinement, but nothing of that kind occurred. Nothing of that kind was likely to occur.

If Jonah retained consciousness, as it seemed he did, he knew perfectly well that nothing of that sort

was probable and therefore he was forced back on God as his only possible recourse.

Again the courses in Fish University oftentimes involve discomfort as well as danger. There is a broad line between the two. A person is uncomfortable when the house in which he lives is displeasing, when the food which he is eating is not attractive and appetizing, when the clothing which he can secure is not gratifying to his æsthetic tastes, when the people who are about him are not agreeable. In all of these and a thousand other ways a life may be uncomfortable which cannot be said to be in danger and which cannot be said to be alone, yet this latter, as well as the two former elements, are oftentimes involved in the training which God gives people who are to be used for large things.

THE MINISTER'S WIFE

I heard Colonel Davis say that when he went to Cheyenne there was no church building, no place to live, nothing except a great lot of needy, perishing people. He went to work practically alone, except for the companionship and help of his wife. Speaking of the church, he said: "Every nail in that church building which I did not drive, my wife drove." It is not strange that such a man should have been successful in the army, successful in the home mission

field and successful in Japan, and there is no question but that the difficulties through which he passed were one of the conditions of his success.

Let the person who reads these words, who is at present taking courses in this great school, be of good courage. They are not pleasant, but they are profitable. No difficulties for the present seem joyous, on the other hand, they seem grievous but afterwards they work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby.

DID YOU GO TO TARSHISH?

On the other hand, if you have had an easy time, if your path has been smooth and pleasant, if your life has been unfruitful, look about and see if you cannot find a place where God called you to isolation, danger and difficulty. Seek to recall whether or not at that time you shrunk from the narrow, hard path which opened before you. If you did, believe that that is probably the reason for your unfruitfulness. "Every branch which beareth fruit is purged." Branches which do not bear fruit are cut away, and men gather them and they are burned.

I find myself shrinking when the skilled gardener goes at trees or vines. He seems almost cruel and one's heart grieves over the bleeding vines and trees,

nevertheless this is the condition of choice fruits and generous harvests.

Fish University will never be a popular school. Those who attend it will not boast of its facilities or its attendance. The instructor is not obtrusive. He does not spend any time in telling what a distinguished person He is, but out from this school come the men and the women who really lift the world. So if you are already a pupil, rejoice even while you are perplexed and suffering, and if you are not a pupil, make haste to register for all the courses for which God is willing to take you on.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

I READ not a great while ago from one of our most thoughtful men, the following sentence: "We have schools for preaching but no schools for prayer, yet prayer is far more important and far more difficult than preaching." I believe this statement to be substantially correct. As intended I believe it to be exactly correct, but one is here reminded of Andrew Murray's little book entitled, "With Christ in the School of Prayer." We recall the fact that when the disciples came to Jesus and said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray," He did not reply, "There is no need of learning how to pray, anybody knows how to pray. Go on, and pray," but He immediately proceeded to do the thing that they requested. He said to them, "When ye pray say, Our Father," and then laid down that wonderful series of models for acceptable and prevailing prayer.

Still, He dwells among His people and in His people. He is invisible but actually present, and although men do not see Him with their earthly

eyes, they can feel Him in their hearts and see Him with the eyes of faith, if they will. Still He is commissioning and sending forth messengers. Still, He is teaching men who wish to know how to pray. He is represented in this world at this time by the Holy Spirit, whom He revealed and whom He promised to send. He has kept His word and the Holy Spirit is here, speaking for Him, teaching for Him, reproving, encouraging, enlightening, strengthening and comforting for Him.

CHRIST OUR PRAYER TEACHER

Meanwhile, when we on the earth offer up the prayers which He teaches us by His Spirit, He at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us, according to the will of God. Prayer was the habit of His life when He was on the earth and it is still His great occupation. We do not know just what He prayed for when He was here. We can guess. Once in a while we are told. For example, He told Peter that He had prayed for him, but speaking broadly, we do not know for what He made request. We do know definitely what He is praying about now. He lives to make intercession for His people. There is a close connection between the spirit world and this. Angels are said to minister to those who are to be heirs of salvation. They are

said to hold them up in their hands lest they should fall and injure themselves against the stones. We are told that certain angels come with messages of cheer and comfort to hard-pressed servants of God and that other angels made war on the enemies of God. I imagine that if we meditated this subject more frequently and more deeply, we should oftentimes have a strong and vigorous courage where now we are fearful and even defeated.

These thoughts have been suggested by the second chapter of this Old Testament evangel, the second chapter in this prophet whose work is recorded in Jesus' Bible. It is remarkable that reading this prayer through from beginning to end there is not in it a single petition for deliverance. There is a great cry of pain and sorrow in it. There is a meditation on the power and wisdom of God. There is a reference to vows which the evangelist had made and the pledge to fulfil these vows. There is mention of the fact that salvation comes from God and at the end the sublime record is found, "And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land" (Jonah 2:10).

HINTS AND HELPS

I think we have here a number of valuable suggestions for the prayer life. They are, I think, most

of them clearly stated or referred to in my book on "Getting Things from God," but because of the importance of the subject and because we have here a clear and explicit reason, permit me to refer to them again.

And first, we ought never to forget in our prayer life that God knows all we need and all we want. "Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of" (Matt. 6:8), "Your (heavenly) Father knoweth that ye have need of these things" (Luke 12:30). God knew where Jonah was and God knew that he greatly desired to be freed from his desperate danger. Jonah did not have to tell Him this. He might have done so. I do not say there would have been anything sinful in his doing this, but it is significant that he did not, that he simply, like a broken-hearted child, at the knee of a father, tells of his difficulty.

I was talking, not long since, with Dr. D. M. Stearns of Germantown, Pa., who has been used of God so marvelously in securing funds for missions and missionaries. He surprised me by saying that he never prayed for money, that he knew that God was acquainted with the needs of the work, that God was able and willing to supply them and that he simply left the whole subject of finances in God's hands without request. I think there are few who

will read this who will not think of the different method into which the great George Müller of Bristol, England, was led. In his "Life of Trust" he continually tells of the financial straits into which he and the work were brought, of the petitions which he and his fellow-workers laid before God, and of the abundant and timely answers which he received.

GOD'S PLANS CHANGE

I put these two instances side by side that all my readers may again be reminded that God has different methods by which to carry on His work; that it is never safe for one child of God to try to do the way another child of God is led to do, but that always we should receive personal directions from Him. A wise teacher adapts his instructions to the character and abilities and dispositions of his pupils. He reproves one, he encourages another. He urges one forward, he holds another back. He does this because he is a good teacher, because he knows the material with which he is working, and because he wishes to accomplish the best results for each one. So Christ, in His school of prayer, teaches people to do differently because they are different, because their needs are different and because the effects of their lives upon those around them are not to be the same.

WE ARE INCLINED TO IMITATE

I think there is a natural feeling on the part of most Christians to try to be like other Christians who have been successful in their work. When they hear that a certain Christian has prayed in a certain way, then try to pray that way. When they see that an evangelist uses one method successfully, they try to use the same method. The result oftentimes suggests the retort of the demons to the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" (Acts 19:15). These pretenders in religion were seeking to exorcise the demons in the name of Jesus whom Paul preached. They did not speak in the name of Jesus whom *they* knew, but in the name of One about whom they had heard *another* say something. So we ought to learn, if we desire to be successful in the school of prayer, to do the things, to say the words, to learn our lessons for ourselves and not for someone else. If we are with Christ in the school of prayer His instruction is individual, not general. I will not say that He never does any class work, but I am sure that as a rule He gives personal instruction to each individual who registers for the courses which He conducts.

I think it is important that we observe two things that we find in the prayer of Jonah. First, the undertone of confidence and thanksgiving which per-

vades it. He was in a desperate situation. There was no earthly reason to suppose that anything would happen to him, except dying. Evidently he retained consciousness. Whether this was his condition for the whole three days or not, we cannot tell, but while he was praying, of course, he knew what he was doing. He knew the condition in which he was placed, yet away there in the depths of the sea, in the belly of the fish, with no one to whom he could speak except God, he seems to have had confidence in Him. With the roaring billows on every side, above and below, he said, "Salvation is of the Lord."

"ALL THY WAVES AND THY BILLOWS"

I believe that sick people and people who pray for the sick; people who have unconverted friends; people who are in serious financial difficulties; people who are carrying on large enterprises which are involved in great difficulty—I think that all such persons, and persons who have the little troubles which oftentimes are as difficult to bear as the greater ones, will profit if they will drink in this spirit of confidence which belonged to this elder brother of ours. The fact is that the Bible is true, that God is the sort of a person He represents Himself to be. He does not change in His character or in the principles on which He conducts His work. He loves His

prophets as well today as He did three thousand years ago. He loves prophets who fail in duty and run away from difficult service as well as He did Jonah. He is as interested in getting the gospel to needy people now as He was then. In place of looking at the giants, in place of considering the difficulties, in place of begging God to remove them, we should oftentimes make more rapid progress if we would consider how deeply interested He is, how certain He is to help us in due time and while we mention our burdens as a child would mention difficulties to a father, at the same time have great confidence that He will in His own time and in His own way, in a better time and a better way than we would choose, send us relief.

DEFER NOT TO PAY IT

The other thing which I think we ought to learn from this leaf out of the prayer life of this old evangelist is, that it is a good thing to make promises to God and after they are made, it is most important that we keep them.

I have been led providentially to preach in a number of cities and in many churches from the text, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it." I have hardly ever preached this sermon but that God has moved some one of His children

to tell me of unpaid vows and of a resolution to fulfil the promises which had been made. So in this case, Jonah says, "I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that which I have vowed" (Jonah 2:9).

I am fully satisfied that all the difficulties of the Christian man come from a failure to do this thing. Consider the vows which we make when we unite with the church. Consider the marriage vows which we make when we establish our homes and to which God is always a party. Consider the promises which we make to God when we are in difficulties of any kind and then ask God to show whether or not these vows have been paid, these promises fulfilled. I believe in almost every instance where we are involved in difficulties which do not yield and where we come into depressions which weaken the soul for its work, that we shall find that unfulfilled obligations lie at the root of all the difficulties. Let me therefore, as a brother, entreat those who read these words and who are compassed about with difficulties of any kind, to question whether or not they have not obligations to God which have been acknowledged, and yet which have not been satisfied. If they have made pledges to Him which they have quite possibly forgotten, certainly neglected to fulfil and if such failures are found, let me entreat the one who is

troubled to follow the example of this great revivalist, to say with him, "I will pay that which I have vowed."

SAM JONES' METHOD

I have often in public addresses and repeatedly in print referred to what Sam Jones used to say respecting the cause of failure in Christian enterprises. He said, "Many persons pray and act as if they were afraid that God was to fall down on the promises which He has made, whereas," said he, "God always keeps His word, always does better than His word and when there is a failure of any kind, it is a failure, not on His part but on our part." If this is true, and I believe it to be absolutely true, what is the cure for the difficulties which so many times break the peace and consequently the usefulness of Christian men and women? Is it not to pay the vows, to resolve to do the thing which God requires us to do and which we have told Him we will do?

There is a beautiful reticence in this prayer. Jonah does not tell us what he promised God. I imagine that he said to Him something like this, "I am ashamed that I was afraid to go to Nineveh. I think it quite right that you should have brought me into this difficulty and danger, but if it pleases

you to deliver me, I will promptly do the thing you tell me to do." Of course, I am not saying that Jonah said this. There is a reticence in God's record as well as in the prophet's utterance but this, to say the least, would not be unnatural and would seem to conform to facts of the case.

God spoke to the fish and Jonah was vomited out on the dry land and then, for the second time, God said to him, "Go to Nineveh, and preach to it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2).

CHAPTER IX

REBUILT MACHINES

I HAVE spoken in Chapter VI of the fact that God employs His children in new services at times when they imagine that the opportunity of service has gone by forever. This thought is in some measure in my mind as I begin on this chapter, but I approach the truth from another side.

We find typewriters, automobiles, pianos and other machines which have been used and set aside, because of imperfections, sent to factories and having been reconstructed, defective parts removed, weak parts strengthened, they are put upon the market, are frequently purchased, and do excellent work because they have been reconstructed in an efficient manner and are sufficiently strong to accomplish good tasks for those who purchase them.

It is this rebuilding of machines which for some reason have been incapacitated for successful work, which is the thought I desire to impress upon the people who read these words. Jonah was a prophet. There is no intimation in any portion of this book

that God charged him with intentional infidelity to his great calling. As I have said in a former chapter, he was probably a student in some one of the prophetic schools which Elisha had established.

There is every reason to believe that he was a sincere and honest man, endeavoring to do the will of God as best he might, in the place and time in which he lived. This young, unknown prophet found himself suddenly confronted by an impossible task. God required him to go to this great, wicked, hard capital and to deliver a message which, so far as human eye could see, would result in nothing but his sacrifice. Humanly speaking, if Jonah went to Nineveh and delivered God's message, the king would at once order some soldier to take off his head. That command would be obeyed, the city would go on its own reckless, wicked way, and Jonah's life would have been forfeited in what seemed to be a failing cause.

NATURAL TO BE AFRAID

It was perfectly natural that he should shrink back from such a prospect. Most of us would undoubtedly have done the same. There is no reason for supposing that God was angry with him about his failure. Throughout the entire book God speaks to him on every occasion in the loving, gentle tones

of a father who will be obeyed but who, at the same time, comprehends the difficulties which surround his child. There is, of course, no possibility of divine approval or spiritual excuse for any prophet who declines dangerous service to which he is called. In some way he must be prepared to accept his commission and do his work or his failure will result in personal regrets and future fruitlessness.

Is there any way in which a human life, which has thus failed of privilege and duty, can be so reconstructed as to be fitted for the great task which has been offered but declined? There is no question but that this is possible and the story of Jonah furnishes us with an illustration. When he was so afraid that he ran away from his duty, seeking to go a thousand miles west, when God called him six or seven hundred miles east, he was in no condition whatever to have done his work, even if he had, by some miracle, been placed in connection with it. If he had been transported by an angel and set down in one of the beautiful public squares of Nineveh, with the heart and mind which bought the ticket for Tarshish, he could have been of no possible service. His tongue would have cleaved to the roof of his mouth and he would have slunk away, defeated, from within, without any attempt at an assault on the mighty ramparts of sin which were about him on every side.

It was so with Peter before he received the Holy Spirit. He was a sincere believer in Jesus Christ. He said repeatedly that he was willing to die with him and undoubtedly he was, but he lacked the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, which alone could give him courage and confidence in the presence of his difficulties, and so when a maid-servant pointed her finger at him, charging him with being a disciple of Jesus, he denied that he had ever known him and the charge being thrice repeated by servants of the high priest, three times he repeated his denial, at last with oaths and curses, but the Holy Spirit coming down upon Peter six weeks after that awful night when his fears prevailed over his love and faith and courage, he stood before thousands of bigoted and angry Jews and charged them directly and personally with the murder of Jesus Christ.

A GLORIOUS CHANGE

He went on to say that though they had murdered Jesus, God had raised Him from the dead and we do not read that there was one man to sneer at the statement, as the Athenians did when Paul bore testimony to the same great fact. Those angry Jews accepted without question the testimony which Peter bore concerning the murder and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in this respect being superior in religious

faith to many persons who desire to be paid for giving religious instruction in our own time,—men who also call themselves Christians instead of Jews.

There is a hymn to which I often refer and although I know that some of my readers may find it a twice-told tale, I repeat it here for it is an important illustration of the truth which I am seeking to impress. The little hymn entitled "The Bird with the Broken Pinion" goes forward to tell how the bird was happy and singing, how his wing was broken, and how thereafter though he sang sweetly and flew loftily he never attained to the heights which he had formerly reached: "The bird with the broken wing never soared so high again."

I do not know what the writer of this bit of a poem intended to teach. Probably he was seeking to warn men against sin, on the ground that if they did sin, even though they should be pardoned, they would never again attain to the strength which they had formerly enjoyed.

A POOR EXCUSE OF A HYMN

When I was a boy my mother used to tell me a story which had very much the same principle. It was the tale of a lad who failed frequently in duty and whose father finally said to him, "Now, son, every time you do wrong, I shall drive a nail into

this post." The failures were frequent and the nails thickened. At last the little fellow was ashamed and his father said to him. "Every time you triumph over evil doing and do well, I will draw out a nail." Finally the nails were all removed. The little boy's character was very much improved, but as he looked upon the post he burst into tears and his father, who expected him to be cheerful, asked him why he cried. He said, "Father, the nails are gone, but the holes are there yet." The teaching was, you do wrong and though your wrong doing may be pardoned the effects will remain. The conclusion therefore is, do not do wrong. That there is force in this teaching, no one can deny, yet I believe it to be essentially vicious. It seems to put salvation on the basis of human effort rather than divine act. If we are to be forgiven for sins and victorious over them because we have done some good things, that is like the teaching of a masonic lodge or a Hindu temple. It is a clear teaching that men are, saved by works rather than by faith, but the Bible insists upon salvation by faith and upon a salvation which is not partial but complete.

FULL, FREE, PRESENT, PERFECT SALVATION

We are taught in the Scriptures that the believer in Jesus Christ receives full, free, perfect and per-

petual salvation. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that when God has wrought this work in a human soul, the man in whom this miracle has been accomplished will be inferior to his former self. On the contrary, the teaching is clear that before the wing is mended he cannot do any good and that after it is mended he can do all the good he ought to do.

I heard Dr. James M. Gray comment on this unscriptural piece of writing once, and after reciting the words, "The bird with the broken pinion, never soared so high again," he remarked: "That will depend upon who mends the wing." Indeed it will, and whether or not the rebuilt machine will do as good work as the same machine when it was new, will depend upon who made the new machine and who rebuilt it, after it had been lessened in usefulness.

Undoubtedly Jonah was a child of God, before his experience in the sea, but it is equally clear that he had never come to the profound faith in God which that experience furnished him. He was a rebuilt machine, but instead of being less efficient than he had been before, he was immeasurably increased in power.

It would be very interesting if we could know how he bore himself when, after the weeks of weary journeying, he entered into Nineveh. How petty the magnificence of Nineveh must have appeared to

him who had just come from the awful presence of Jehovah, and how confident he must have been in his message and in its results, as he began to preach to that great city, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh will be destroyed." It is easy to imagine how the officials and great men of the city would throng about him. How they would demand to know on what authority he made this singular and improbable statement, to which they had listened, and it is easy to think how strong he would be in his faith and utterance as he told them the story of his first call, his voyage toward the west and his second commission, his reinstatement in his office as an evangelist for Nineveh.

THE GREAT REVIVAL

We do not know whether there were collateral facts furnished by him or not. All we do know respecting the matter is that his message produced a marvelous effect. The king came down from his throne, covered himself with a coarse black cloth and sat in an ash-heap. He commanded the citizens of his capital to do the same. He required them to fast and to pray for three days and did not permit them even to feed and water their cattle.

As Jonah went about the streets of Nineveh, on every side was heard the lowing of the oxen, the

bleating of sheep, the neighing of the horses and the cries of the black-robed people. It was a tribute to the power of Jehovah, manifested through a weak and imperfect agent,—such a man as is reading these words at this time, a man who has perhaps failed of duty more shamefully than did Jonah, but a man who, if he were reconstructed, might do the work of Peter or Moses or Elijah or Paul or Jonah.

What is needed today in the church and in the world is not a lot of men who have never sinned. If this were the need the case would be hopeless, for there never have been such men since Adam, and never will be such men unless a new race is created, but the need of the church and the world is for sinful men who have been born of God, who have received the Holy Spirit, who have been enlightened as to the Word of God and who have been so occupied and taught by His Spirit that there is nothing of which they are afraid, excepting that they may fail of duty. If we could have a legion of such men, they would march through the world a conquering host, putting down the evil and establishing righteousness on every side.

MENDED WINGS; REBUILT MACHINES

Birds with broken wings, yes, but birds with broken wings which have been mended by almighty God

who made all the birds in the beginning and who is able to rebuild a machine which has been injured, perhaps in the eyes of men destroyed, but which God is able to make into such an instrument of power that it shall accomplish not the work of a human machine but the work of a divine being.

Is it not true that there are multitudes of Christians who have made a failure in their lives, who have never attained to a complete victory? Who long, as they read, for such an infilling and such a reconstruction as shall make them more than conquerors through Christ who has loved them? Are there not multitudes of ministers of the Gospel whose ministry has been in large measure a failure and who, more than anything else, desire today a ministry which is a real success? If there are such persons, let them take courage from this Old Testament evangel, upon which we are meditating, for it shows clearly that human limitations, infirmities, even sins, cannot prevail against the mighty power of God.

President Finney, many years ago, said, "The church swarms with a multitude of unconverted members and unsuccessful ministers." Yet this is not necessarily true. It did not remain true of many of the churches to which that great child of God himself bore the message. Hundreds and thousands of professed Christians and many ministers, by his

teaching, were enabled to lay hold on divine power for a new life and a real and blessed work. Why should it not be so now?

THE NIGHT COMES, AND ALSO THE DAY

The darkness deepens as our Lord's approach draws near. There has never been a time when the world was more needy than it is today. The boasted civilization, education and refinement which were to reconstruct the world have been proven to be utter failures. Unlettered savages living in bark huts were never more unspeakably, desperately, cruel and depraved than the graduates of universities and gymnasias who are now murdering men and women and children who have never been combatants and who cannot be. These desperately wicked people fight soldiers well, but they seem to have an insane delight in murdering those who are not soldiers and who from the nature of the case never can be.

In such an age as this is there not a call for Jonahs, for prophets who can walk into great, licentious, cruel, wicked cities like Nineveh, and warn men to turn from their sins lest they experience the judgments of God? If there were men who were really reconstructed from the center to the circumference of their beings, so that they could deliver the message of God to these stiff-necked, stout-hearted, high

headed, sinners, in a divine manner, might we not hope even yet while the Lord still tarries, that a great multitude of people, no worse than those of Nineveh, might repent and believe the gospel and be saved?

CHAPTER X

HE WENT DOWN INTO THE SHIP

IT is foolish to attach too much importance to accidental expressions yet when a word or phrase is frequently repeated, it naturally raises the question, Why? In this story the words "down" and "prepared" are both noticeable by reason of repetition. Jonah went down to Joppa; he went down into the ship; he went down into the sides of the ship and though the word is not used in this connection, he went down into the sea.

Again, we are told that God prepared a great fish; that He prepared a gourd; that He prepared a worm; that He prepared a vehement east wind. These two words, "down" and "prepared," indicate the failure of man and the superintending providence of God. Man has always been a failure. Jonah was not peculiar in this respect.

Our first parents were innocent. They had not the handicap of sin with its unhappy memories. Their environment was perfect. They were in a sinless world. Satan was an interloper. He had

no right or title here. He was suffered to come as a test for our first father, but he was then, as he is now an outlaw.

There are persons who wish to attribute all of evil to descent; there are others who teach that it is to be credited to surroundings, but the case of Adam and Eve distinctly negatives both of these theories. They had no bad inheritance and they had no evil surroundings except for the presence of Satan. Provisions for their welfare were abundant. The resources of the world were at their command, but when the test came and the question was whether they would obey God or not, they failed. They went down and their descendants have remained down. This was the first great failure of human kind. Provisions for recovery were at once announced. The seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head, but the bad beginning was the precursor to a worse end. "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill." So it was, so it will be to the dark and unlovely end.

ANOTHER START

The flood gave the human race another chance, but it was only ended when we find the best man there was in the world lying drunk, an object of shame to his own children. Apologies may be made

for him. The probability is, he did not know the effect of the liquor which he drank before he was drunk. It was very sad to see,—it is sad to remember. He went down and his descendants went down.

Abraham being chosen for a new place of beginning, God revealed Himself to him. He separated him from his home friends. He took him away into the hills to educate him to be the beginning of a better time. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. He lived a glorious life but his descendants descended until they crucified the Son of God without knowing what they did.

The age of the Christian church began with a marvelous exhibition of divine power. Spirit, soul and body, it touched men with a new life. God seemed to put Himself at the disposal of men. He gave His disciples power over demons, to cast them out; power over sickness, to heal it; power over sins, to deliver men. But the age of Ephesus passed into the age of Pergamos and Thyatira, and when the time of Sardis came, this Christian church, bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, had a name to live while it was really dead. Now the awful Laodicean period is upon us. Men boast of their culture, of their education, of their buildings, of their numbers, of their teachers and of their

music, and at the same time do not know that they are poor and miserable and naked and have need of all things. It is not pleasant to write these words. It is less pleasant to know that they are true. It is not agreeable to hear them.

ARE WE IN THE APOSTASY?

Only yesterday I heard a minister say that there was no moral collapse in our time, that the world was better than it ever was and was to continue improving. I do not understand his mode of thought, but these are the words which he said. I think, however, that most persons who reflect upon the present state of the world believe that there has been a frightful collapse of morals and that the church, with its worldliness, its pride and vanity, its neglect of God's Word, its fellowship with the world, is largely responsible.

How can things be other than they are when the churches of Jesus Christ are so largely composed of those who give no sign of being born of God.

President Finney's words quoted in a previous chapter about unconverted church members and self-deceived ministers are very strong. President Finney's words generally were. I do not assume responsibility for them, but there was a reason for what he said, and if his statements were true then, we have

reason to fear that there is at least a measure of truth in it now.

THE TROUBLE IN CHURCHES

Prophets are afraid to deliver the messages which God gives them for their Nineveh. They go down to Joppa and sail away for Tarshish. They unite with lodges in the hope of securing salaries and the good-will of the world. In some measure they succeed in this desire, but what is the result for the church,—few or no conversions,—no people weeping out their sins before God,—no sanctification, robbers of God sitting in the high places of the churches; no testimony in prayer meetings; scarcely any prayer meetings; the testimony and the prayer meeting degenerating into little lectures which are usually scantily attended; the tithes and the offerings which have been kept back from God now being paid out in extravagant prices for living. War taxes and no man to tell what tomorrow shall bring forth.

Down, down, down, down! This is the universal tendency of the human race, of the present world. The remedy is obvious. It is a return to duty, a return to God. God has not cast off His people whom He foreknew. Jesus Christ has not lost interest in the church, which He purchased with His blood. “At evening time it shall be light” (Zech.

14:7). When every human device fails and there seems before us nothing but a time of darkness and despair, then the King will come.

CHAPTER XI

MURMURERS AND COMPLAINERS

I THINK comparatively few people look upon murmuring and complaining as a sin. I believe it to be one of the easily-besetting sins of a multitude of God's people. I am sure that for years it was one of mine, and I am furthermore certain that I never obtained any deliverance from it, victory over it, until I confessed it to God as a real and serious transgression.

The result of murmuring and complaining has always been judgment. It was so with Israel during the forty years. God had delivered them from their bondage of centuries and started them on the road to a land which flowed with milk and honey. Every step in this whole movement was marked by the wonderful love and the miraculous power of God. It would seem that even an ungrateful people would have been awed by the thunders and the lightnings, the armies of devastating insects, the darkness which might be felt, the distinction which God made between His people and their enemies.

All these things combined would seem to have assured humility and gratitude among the chosen people. It was not so. They murmured when they had no bread. They murmured when they had no meat. They murmured when they did not get the kind of bread they wanted. They murmured when the supply of water failed. They found fault when Moses stayed too long talking with God and after their murmurings, always there were afflictions and following the afflictions there was a sort of half repentance and then again there were murmurings.

ELIJAH UNDER THE JUNIPER TREE

I do not know precisely how much there was of sinful murmuring in the heart of Elijah, but certainly in the wilderness and in Mount Horeb he seems to have criticised God. "All the rest are gone. Take my life away. I am not better than my fathers." The implied statement is, "You put more upon me than I ought to bear. Things are too difficult. I would like to be excused." Probably Elijah would not have said all these things in words, but the old proverb is true, "Actions speak louder than words." Indeed they do, and the actions of Elijah indicated a state of mind respecting God which was not filial.

It was so with Jonah. Highly honored in his first commission, pardoned and trained when he re-

fused to accept and fulfil it, delivered from death and spared for service in a most miraculous fashion, his message most wonderfully energized and a great city saved from present ruin, one would have supposed that his heart would have been overflowing with thanksgiving. It would seem as if he should have been thankful to walk about the streets of Nineveh; to see the changed faces of the men and women; to hear the songs and witness the play of the little children and to see the flocks and herds watered and fed, going forth to their pastures, with contentment written in every line. On the contrary, we find him sitting outside the city, looking on to see whether or not the judgments would fall and murmuring because they did not. The reason which he assigns is very peculiar. He says, "I knew that you were merciful and would probably spare the people, so I did not want to come. I told you this when I was in my own country. You required me to come and now it has turned out just as I expected. You are not destroying the city. The people will, some of them, perhaps all of them, think me a false prophet. I do well to be angry even unto death."

STRANGE HOW MEN SIN

It seems strange, even impossible that a prophet who had the training which Jonah had received should have thus sinned against God. He does not

say a single word in the way of thanks that his message has been heeded and obeyed. With the king and the people sitting in sack-cloth and ashes, with the dumb animals crying out as if in repentance and for pardon, and with the whole population turned away from their sins in humility before God, he finds apparently not a single occasion for gratitude. If he finds it he does not mention it. There is not a word of thanksgiving that God has been willing to use him for accomplishing the tremendous task which he had wrought.

We do not know precisely how long the ministry of Jonah continued but there is no reason for supposing it to have been a lengthy mission. His marvelous experience in the sea and the tremendous character of his message seemed to have impressed people very deeply and apparently without delay they humbled themselves before God and cried out for mercy.

We are not to criticize him too severely. The connection between body and soul is intimate yet inscrutable. We cannot know how much the body affects the spirit, nor in precisely what ways the spirit affects the body, but we do know that after all great drains on nerve energy, depression is a natural, if not an inevitable result. It was so at Carmel and in the wilderness. No man stands alone con-

fronting a nation of idolaters, headed by an army of blatant, rebellious priests, without having occasion for all the faith and courage which God will give him, and no matter how much faith and courage he may receive, there is necessarily a tremendous expenditure of nervous force. It was so with Jonah. The fearful commission which he first received, the fearful experience through which he passed in his efforts to avoid it, the fearful journey across the wilderness and desert, the natural dread of the powerful, magnificent, wicked city to which he had come, the delivery of his message against all the apparent probabilities of the case, threatening with destruction within forty days one of the most powerful and beautiful cities of the world; all these things combined to drain the prophet dry of the last particle of physical and mental courage.

GOD UNDERSTOOD IT

I do not think God blamed him very much. I do not think God blamed Elijah very much. I do not think He blamed Moses very much for his failure, under circumstances somewhat similar.

It is a fact that God loved the world and that He loves the world, and that there is no tired, worn-out mother, exhausted with the care of the house, with ministry to husband and children, who will read these

words and who is sometimes left to murmur and complain, who will not find that God takes account of all the facts in the case and does not too severely criticise one who is loyal to Him and is exhausted with her work.

This is a real consolation. It is intended to be so. It seems to me that no mother or father ever quieted a crying child more gently than God dealt with these children of His who murmured and complained and yet who were sound at heart.

The murmurers and the complainers of whom Jude speaks were different from these whom we have in view. They were more like us. They complained about nothing; little trifling disappointments, trifling inconveniences and trifles which the world calls sacrifices, but which God calls opportunities, these are the things which anger God.

COMPLAINERS SHOULD BEWARE

We have a right to be afraid for them. Murmurs work out great injury to any who allow themselves to come into this unfortunate and sinful class. It is notable that even in the case of these good men, brave men, true men, there seems to have been a sort of a penalty. When Elijah told God that he was the only prophet there was alive, God said to him, "You are quite mistaken, I have seven thousand in

Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal, but since you are tired and think yourself the only one, go, and anoint Elisha to be a prophet in your room." And it is a notable fact that though God can rebuild machines and does rebuild them, though He can send rain on the stubble-fields and does send it, and though it pleases Him greatly to honor Himself and His children in service, long after the apparent end of service, yet there are limitations. There are points beyond which He does not go.

He gave Jonah a second commission when he had thrown away the first and He prepared him miraculously to fulfil his commission and when he fulfilled this commission He made his word fruitful so that three-quarters of a million of men and women and children were spared a destruction which was close at hand; which would have probably been like that which leaped down from the sky upon Sodom and Gomorrah. For more than one hundred and fifty years the judgments were averted by his ministry. One hundred and twenty thousand little children, who did not know which was the right hand and which was left, lived, many of them, to grow old, perhaps to have grandchildren playing about their knees, to tell the story of the strange prophet who preached the great revival sermons in the streets of Nineveh when they were babies and when Jonah,

seemingly forgetting all this, murmured against God and said, "I do well to be angry even unto death," God seems to have made up His mind that He would not employ Jonah for further service. At all events, we have no record of new commissions and new work.

MIGHT HE HAVE HAD ANOTHER REVIVAL

What would have been the result if Jonah at this time could have been a happy, thankful prophet? If he could have walked among those saved multitudes, telling them of the God whom he worshipped and served who delighted in mercy and came slowly to judgment and terror? Would God have sent him down to Babylon? Would He have sent him over into Persia? Would He have given him a message to India or China or Egypt? I do not know. All I am sure of is that God greatly honored His servant, that He gave him a magnificent piece of work to do and that when it was done, the poor, human prophet murmured and complained instead of thanking and praising God, and the result was that so far as we are informed, he was never used again. Be careful. God is patient, but there are limits and He only knows where they are.

CHAPTER XII

THE GREAT REVIVAL

THE word "revival" is a significant one. It does not mean the creation of life, but the renewal of life, yet as it is employed among men, it is generally used to designate times when sinners who are dead in their sins come to God. It is interesting to think why the impartation of life should be called by this word which indicates its revival after a period of comparative weakness.

I believe it is the testimony of all evangelists that their messages are never fruitful among the unconverted until they have first done their work among those who are professed believers. I think there is no exception to the rule that the evangelist first seeks to secure a revival on the part of those who live and that from this vantage ground he pushes forward to secure life for those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

With this thought in mind, let each one remember that for himself he may have a revival at any time when he chooses. If his faith has been dampened, if

his obedience has been intermittent, if his prayer life, his communion with God through His Word, his participation in the work of the kingdom has fallen short, whenever he recognizes these facts and draws near to God he will find the old fire kindling in his soul. In other words, he will experience a revival.

The contagion of spiritual state is as real as that of physical condition. It is no more true that small-pox or tuberculosis may be imparted by contact than it is that spiritual life and strength may be extended in the same manner. When one is revived, it is quite in the order of nature that some one else should be revived also and this is the secret of those life-giving times in the history of the church, when multitudes who are without God and without hope in the world are saved.

REVIVAL BEFORE THE REVIVAL

I believe Mr. Sunday has sometimes said that he does not go to cities to secure a revival but he goes to cities to direct and reap in a revival which has already begun. I believe in the city of Philadelphia there were something like forty thousand men, to say nothing of women and children, who had enrolled themselves for Bible study and prayer meetings, before his meetings began.

A gentleman recently told me of a city to which an

evangelist was coming. Scores of prayer-meetings were organized and all the pulpits of co-operating churches were directing attention to the meetings which were to begin. For some reason the evangelist was not able to come at the time specified, yet my friend said to me that the conversions in these prayer-meetings and churches began at the time when he was expected. This seems to show that when God's people are planning for His work, there is a soul movement which begins when the first attempts to draw near to God are made.

This revival, which is recorded in this Old Testament evangel is in many respects the most remarkable one of which we have record. There were no committees appointed. The evangelist was a young, inexperienced, unknown preacher. So far as we are informed he had no "party" to help him in the city, no companions to share with him in the work. There was no publicity except that which was secured by his preaching. There was no tabernacle erected. The preaching seems to have been done in the streets, yet the result of this unorganized campaign, this campaign in which God and a single preacher seemed to have been about the only workers, was such an upheaval in the life of the city as has never been known in the history of the world. The chief executive himself went down from his throne to sit in

an ash-heap. He required all his people to go without food, to keep their domestic animals without food, to clothe themselves in a coarse, black cloth and cry continually to God for pity and pardon.

It was in every way a most remarkable occasion and it affords many examples for those who today desire to be used of God in securing changed lives on the part of men.

“NEW OCCASIONS TEACH NEW DUTIES”

When I was a boy I remember in the Latin reader out of which we were instructed there was a sentence like this, “The times change and we change with them.” I am not disposed to criticise my brethren who organize the religious campaigns of my time. There is so much deadness, inertness, apparent lack of care, that I would feel thankful if a dog in the street showed a disposition to secure new life on the part of the church. While I could not do myself some of the things which are done, could not say many of the things which are *reported*, I have no doubt but that in these meetings great good is really accomplished and many souls are saved.

I remember to have been in a meeting about a year and a half ago when for an hour or two there was a perfect bedlam. A procession came in with a band of music. Efforts were made, apparently to flatter

all the people and every class or division of people by the speakers. There were cheers for this one and cheers for that one. Cheers for almost everybody excepting God. By and by the minister preached, the sort of a sermon which would naturally follow such a medley as we had listened to. My host was a minister of the city and when we were going home I said to him that I could not understand how anybody could possibly be converted in such a place as that. He said, "Well, I confess it does not look very propitious yet there was at least one man converted there tonight. Way back in the rear of the tabernacle, sitting near one of the stoves which heated it, I found him, a man of about sixty, really convicted of sin and weeping because of his sin, and before I left him he seemed to come into the clear light of salvation." That particular minister was not at all given to the spectacular performances that were characteristic of that revival. He was himself a quiet man, relying upon the Holy Spirit and the truth to secure his results. His own church is a revival church. He receives members from one year's end to the other. He has been nearly or quite thirty years in that church and is a fair judge of what conversions really are. I could not doubt his testimony respecting the event of that evening.

When I was in college, one of my professors used

occasionally to say, "When I was a boy I thought the thunder killed people, but when I became a man I found it was the lightning that killed and that the thunder was just a noise." There are religious workers who do not seem to have learned what my professor had found out. They do not seem to have read the account of Elijah at the cave's entrance on Horeb. They seem to feel that unless there is a certain amount of pounding and stamping and shouting, the work of salvation cannot go forward, but this great revivalist, engaged in this great revival seems to teach us a different lesson. No processions except the prophet and the terrified people who followed him. No messages except the burning one which God had entrusted to him. No helper except the Holy Spirit sending the word home to the hearts of men. This was the situation and the result was what we have seen, a whole city, from beggar to king, humbled before God, afraid to continue in sin, asking for the mercy of God and this change so real, so fundamental, that it has enabled God for a hundred and fifty years, to spare a people who were already ripe for ruin.

WHAT SHALL WE DO THEN?

It is a practical question what my reader who would like to have a revival in his home, in his

church or in his town ought to do. Shall he send for Jonah? Shall he organize a number of committees? Shall he break into the newspapers and thus seek to secure the results he knows to be desirable, which perhaps he knows to have been unavailingly sought? I cannot tell. God leads different people differently, but He leads all who are willing to follow and no man will earnestly desire a revival of God's work and take the measures which God's Spirit directs, without seeing in some degree the results which he longs for.

President Finney used to say that the law of cause and effect was as valid in the spiritual realm as in the realm of matter. He insisted that wherever people wished a revival, God was willing to give them one, yet I have known a church to gather a force of five or six preachers, print all their pictures on a card, send these cards through the community and carry on meetings for weeks with no more sign of God's presence than there was on Carmel when the prophets of Baal were shrieking out their prayers to their god.

JONAH MUST BE RIGHT

What is the explanation and what bearing has the explanation on the duty of my reader who realizes the need of a revival and who sincerely desires to

have one? I think the teaching is plain. Jonah and God are quite sufficient to save Nineveh, if Jonah is willing, quietly and absolutely to put himself under the direction of the Most High, and there is nothing else that will produce revival in the times of Jonah or in our times or in any other times.

God cannot be deceived and He is not willing to be mocked. When men say, "Lord, Lord," and do not the things which He requires they are an offense to Him. He loathes them and their offerings but wherever a sinful man smites upon his breast, fearing even to look up toward the sky and says, "God be merciful to me a sinner," there is the incoming of the divine life. No matter what the past may have been, the man will go down to his house justified.

CHAPTER XIII

CAN THE HEATHEN BE SAVED?

THE story of this Old Testament gospel naturally suggests the question whether or not the averting of temporal judgments necessarily carries with it the pardon of sin and the life of God for the human soul. In other words, were the Ninevites saved when Nineveh was? No earthquake shook the foundations of palace, theatre, temple and lordly mansion. No fiery waves swept the city from square to square. The humiliation of the people accomplished one great result, the judgment which was threatening was delayed. It finally came, for as we have already seen, it is natural for men to deteriorate and sin always works out its own deadly results, no matter when or where, but have we reason to hope that these poor people, so ignorant and helpless as they were, along with the temporal mercies which they received, received also the gift of eternal life? Here, of course, we are compelled to recognize the fact that the Bible has never been the possession of the whole race and that the whole

Bible was never the possession of any part of the race until less than two thousand years ago.

What shall we believe as to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the millions of men who lived in their time, who did not have all the light which *they* had and who came to the end of their earthly journeys with a mingled record of good and evil? Shall we teach that these people were necessarily lost? Shall we teach that the heathen of our own time who never see a missionary, who never read a line in the New Testament, who never know any one of the great facts which we know, shall we believe and teach that these people are all of them necessarily lost?

CONDEMNED ALREADY

There is no question but that the vast majority of them are lost already and will remain lost unless some provision for them, about which we know absolutely nothing, is made. The spiritual superstition and degradation in which they are involved are correctly represented by the physical filth and degradation under which they suffer. India had hospitals for mangy monkeys and cats, but no hospitals for suffering men or women and little children until the missionaries took them in. So when we ask whether men in heathen lands, men in the world when the

whole world was heathen, can be saved, we are not asking whether or not they are likely to be.

We know that they are lost and undone at present. We know that they will continue so until some force brings them in contact with the healing hand of God. We ought, therefore, as humanitarians, if we were not ourselves Christians at all, to put them in possession of the Christian teaching which we know to be profitable for this life and for the life that is to come. This, I say, is the edict of mere humanity apart from the example and commands of Jesus Christ Himself, but when we undertake to think along the lines suggested by the title of this chapter, we have a right to take into account all the facts in the case and to derive as much comfort as we can from the truth as it is revealed.

THE HEAVENS TEACH

The Word of God clearly teaches that those who sin in ignorance are not judged on the same basis as are those who sin under light. This is rational and it is revealed. We are bound to believe it, if we believe either our common sense or the Word of God, but to say that God will punish those who sin without the law less severely than He will punish those who sin under the law, is not to say that eternal

life is possible to anyone who has not the objective revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Bible attempts to answer no questions of mere curiosity. It is intended to be a practical book for practical men and women. It is not a practical question for us whether or not heathen who never have the Word of God may possibly be saved. We know absolutely that whether they may or may not, most of them never will be saved unless they have the gospel, and we know that the ruin in which they are involved destroys spirit, soul and body. It produces miseries of most frightful character which we can see every day with our own eyes and unless the laws of cause and effect cease to prevail after death, we have no hope for those people who die in sin.

Sin and suffering are married and no court will ever pronounce a divorce. Lacking, therefore, a clear revelation, we are shut up to the best judgments we can form and while I do not teach it as a matter of doctrine, I hold as a matter of personal faith that God has never put any human being outside the possibility of salvation without the fault of that human being.

WHOSOEVER WILL MAY COME

Jesus Christ was the light which lights every man that comes into the world. This the Word of God

affirms. Evidently if this is true He enlightens some men by speaking to their spirits as He did to the spirit of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and not by means of a book which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not have, which the heathen of today do not have, and it is my conviction that if men to whom Jesus Christ speaks in the Spirit obey His voice, and do the things which are pleasing to Him, He certainly will approve and deliver them. This to me seems the clear affirmation of reason and to be not in any wise contradicted by the Word of God.

The case of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, seems to confirm this judgment. If this be true, it may throw a little light on the question as to the Ninevites. When the prophet's message came to them they gave attention to it, they humbled themselves outwardly and so far as we can judge, inwardly before God who was offended with their sins. They cried for mercy. Certainly they received external blessings. Their lives were not destroyed. Their city was not destroyed. For one hundred and fifty years or more Nineveh stood. Associated with this temporal stay of judgment did multitudes of these poor, blind people in a poor, blind fashion, nevertheless in some fashion, find a God who could pardon their spirits as well as one who could save their homes? I am glad to believe that this is true.

I do not affirm it, for the Bible does not affirm it and I affirm and deny only by authority of the Word of God, but it seems to me consistent with all that is said and what is more important, it seems to me consistent with the character of God.

I love to think that many of those poor people, delivered when they cried by the unmerited mercy of God, have for these centuries, millenniums, been associated with the patriarchs and prophets and saints who, like them, did not have the light which we enjoy, but who also, like them, humbled themselves before God and asked Him for pardon and mercy.

WHY THEN MISSIONARIES?

One may say, If this is true, why should we send missionaries to the heathen world? and I answer, Because we are charged to do so. If I am directed by competent authority to do a certain thing, I have no right to stand back and look on until I can calculate how my obedience or disobedience will turn out. The duty of immediate submission to lawful authority is a universal among free beings. I have no right to calculate when I know that God has commanded. This is the first reason why we should pass on the word which we have received. God has told us to do it and this settles the matter, but another reason which, if less weighty, nevertheless has great

force, is the one to which reference has already been made. Suppose a million of people in Nineveh are in danger of temporal and eternal ruin. Suppose that they have light enough to be saved if they would use it all, but suppose I know that they will not use it all, that they never have used it and that I have no reason whatever to believe that they will do so and, supposing further, I know that if I carry the message, some of them, many of them will believe and be saved,—what now is my duty? Supposing that one out of ten thousand could be saved if I do not perform my duty, but that five thousand out of ten thousand may be saved if I do do the thing which I am commanded. Is it not obvious here again that the duty of evangelizing the world is one which no Christian can innocently neglect?

I will not say that a single Ninevite went into the Paradise of God, because I do not know that this is true. I believe it is true. I am glad to believe it is true. I believe that many of those poor people have associated with Jonah who brought them their message, with Abraham and with the other patriarchs and prophets who had not a written revelation, in the Paradise of God. The fact that I believe this encourages me to take messages to my Nineveh. The fact that I believe this, makes me ashamed that I have not been more faithful in taking messages to

my Ninevehs and makes me resolve to be more faithful in bearing these messages in the days to come.

GOD ALWAYS WORKS

Personally, I give my testimony that over and again when I have imperfectly done the work which God has taught me to do for other people, my unbelief has been rebuked and my faith has been strengthened by events less in extent but like in kind to the one which is given to us in the story of Jonah. I believe that if the ministers and the Sunday-school teachers and the fathers and mothers and the friends of friends who read these words will all of them look about for the Ninevehs for which they are responsible, perhaps the Nineveh in the kitchen, maybe the one up stairs, perhaps the one who is opening the store in the morning, maybe one who is reading proof in a newspaper office, perhaps some church which is cold and dead, perhaps a school which is so puffed up with knowledge that it cannot be built up with love,—no matter what the Nineveh may be, I believe if Jonah will bear his message and deliver it honestly, in the fear of God, he may save his Nineveh.

That is, I believe that you who read these words may save your children, your husband, your wife, your church, your neighbor, if you will go to your

Nineveh, and preach to it the preaching that God bids you. But if you are afraid, if you are self-seeking, if you are ease-loving, if you would rather have your friend feel kindly toward you than feel kindly toward God, if you would rather your social arrangements should not be disturbed, than that your friends who are in the road to death eternal should be brought into the kingdom of God, then you will never deliver your message. So far as you are concerned, your Nineveh will never be saved, but his blood will God require at your hand.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE

I DESIRE in this final word to say a few words on two subjects. They have been intimated heretofore but I desire to set them in a clear light at the close of this writing. In the first place, a few words about miracles in general; in the second place, a few words about the particular miracle recorded in this Old Testament gospel.

First, about the general question of the miraculous. I take it up because, so far as I understand the infidelity of the day, it springs from the theory that this is a universe of law and that miracles are an impossibility or so very improbable, that we have no reason to believe a book which records them to be true.

When those of us who are men were boys, this infidelity respecting the miraculous, which, of course, projects itself instantly over the whole Bible record, was characteristic of men who openly called themselves infidels. It has now found its way among Christian teachers, or those who call themselves

Christian teachers, to a most frightful extent and is, in my judgment, the cause of the awful moral collapse which is the distinguishing feature of the world today.

A few years ago it would have been deemed impossible that any beings not devils out of hell should do such things as the most cultured and enlightened people in the world have been doing for the last three years. I believe they have been left to these horrible savageries, these diabolisms, these outrages upon men and women and little children, chiefly because their religious teachers have been for years instructing them that the Bible is not true, that miracles have not been and will not be, that this is a universe of law, that man has developed from the lower animals, that every fall has been a fall upward, that the human race is not to be saved by a miraculous transformation of character, wrought by the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men but that men are to be saved spiritually, as they are said to have been lifted physically, by a process of evolution.

NO BIBLE, NO HUMANITY

This doctrine I firmly believe to be a doctrine of devils. I say this with all charity toward the unfortunate men who have been teaching it. I desire to be absolutely charitable toward them, but I am

compelled to pray for them as Jesus prayed for His murderers, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." I may be wrong, but my conviction is settled and I am held responsible to utter my testimony if I say anything. I would gladly be silent. It is no pleasure to me to say things which I know will injure the feelings of some persons whom I sincerely esteem as kind and gentle men and women of the world, but the prophet who has a dream may tell his dream while the one who has the Word of God must speak it faithfully. An honest man does not mix up chaff and wheat, and while I write these words with a great sorrow in my heart, and while I often teach them with tears in my eyes as well as in my heart, I believe that what I have said is true and that it is the explanation of the awful apostasy in which our churches are so largely lost.

Only the other day I was in a beautiful city and passed by a beautiful church, in which years ago I preached the gospel of the Son of God. That church was unfortunate enough to secure a few infidels to preach to it. The praying members of the church objected. The other members of the church said they were bigoted and narrow-minded and that everything was all right. Little by little the church fell away. Now it has disbanded. The members are scattered, a few of them going into another church

nearby, many of them going nowhere. The property is about to be sold, and this is only one case.

NO FRUIT WITHOUT TREES

Years ago I had a friend living not very far from my home. He was a kindly man and his wife was a kindly and excellent woman. There was a group of children giving every promise of Christian faith and usefulness in the world. They are in a distant portion of our country now and I was guest in their home only a few months since. The lady said to me, "We are still members of the church in Illinois where we were, but we are going to take our letters away as soon as we can get them and we do not intend to unite with any other church." The children whom I hoped would be good soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ were trained in these modern schools, in modern ways of thinking and not one of them has apparently any interest whatever in the kingdom of God. One or two of them are hoping to do a great deal of good by social science. They have a desire to be good people and they will be good people for they are kindly young folk, but no sinner sick of sin and afraid of judgment will ever be helped by any of that family, unless they change.

NATURALNESS OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Let us, therefore, once more return to the subject of the miraculous. Have we a right to believe the

miracles recorded in the Bible to have been actual facts? I answer for myself without the slightest hesitation, we have a right to believe them every one to have occurred as they are recorded. I will cheerfully admit every correction in the texts which a careful study of all the manuscripts available seems to justify, but when this work of honest students has been done and we have, as nearly as we can determine, the record of a miracle, I believe it to be true, just as I believe that I am alive, as I believe that Mr. Wilson is president of the United States. I wish all other people could believe as I do regarding this matter. I think that it is a peril not simply to faith but to morals to doubt this. Why then do I believe the miracles of the Bible to be true as recorded? First, because as I have said before, it is not only possible that a divine being should work divinely, that an infinite being should work infinitely, but it is necessary that he should do so.

You will observe that I assume the theistic theory of the universe. I know there are a very few belated people who think the universe came by chance, or that it is self-organized, but I dismiss these people, not because I feel unkindly toward them, but because they are so few as to be a negligible element in human population. The masses of mankind, even the heathen, believe in God and because one cannot

give his reasons for every faith he has and must assume something, I at this time omit giving my reasons for belief in God, and I express my faith that since I believe in God, I know miracles to be not only possible but probable.

The probability of miracles rests on the character of God. It is natural for a good person to do all the good he can do to those who are in need. It will be, therefore, natural for God, since He has the power to work miracles, to do so on every occasion where He will thus serve the good of His creatures. Here is a leper. He is rotting to pieces. Unless there is divine interposition, he will rot to pieces, and here is God manifested in the flesh. He walks about as a man, but He is God still. He can help the leper. There is no question but that He can. It is extremely probable that He will, for the same reason that my reader, if he is a fairly decent person, is likely to relieve a suffering man, woman or child who is brought in touch with him if he has the power.

Here is a widow going out from a city gate, following the body of an only son. Here is God manifested in the flesh and He has power to give that dead young man to his mother. The report says that He did so. It says, "He gave him to his mother." It does not say that the poor mother leaned upon

His arm as she went back to her humble home, with tears of gratitude raining over her face. I rather think this is what happened, but it is not affirmed, so I do not affirm it. The record is that Jesus raised him and gave him to his mother and that is not only possible, but it is absolutely probable. In place of its being a statement to be doubted, it is a statement to be believed until a reason for doubting is clearly made out. Why? For the same reason that my reader, if a fairly decent man would help a poor widow under such circumstances, if he could.

Here are a crowd of five or ten thousand people on the side of a mountain. They are men, women and children. They have been for some days listening to a remarkable Teacher. The food, which they carried with them into the mountain, is exhausted and they are getting hungry. It is quite possible for God to supply their need miraculously. There are various good ends which might be served by such a course of action. Is it probable that He will do so? Yes, it is probable, if the reason is sufficient. The record states that He did that very thing. Why should we believe it? Because it would be the natural thing for God to do. Why should we doubt it? We have no right to doubt it unless we think God is about as big as we are. If we recognize God as the Creator and Ruler of the universe, we have

no reason to doubt it at all. Why should men who can doubt that record call themselves ministers of the gospel? I confess I cannot tell. I do not see that they have any gospel to preach. It would not be good news to me to be told that God was about as powerful as the average pastor of a city church, or a teacher in a college.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

One might go on indefinitely but there must be a place to stop, so let us leave the examination of particular instances to say that the fact that God could work miracles if He would, the fact that it is extremely probable that He has done so and is doing so, is not in itself evidence that this possibility and probability has become actual fact.

Regarding this matter we must go to the evidence. The question is a question of the witnesses. Witnesses who are competent and honest are to be believed. Witnesses who are incompetent or dishonest are not to be believed.

Now the great witness for the miracles of the Bible is Jesus Christ. He certified to those of the Old Testament. He was the author of many of those in the New. If His testimony is sufficient, we not only know that miracles are possible and probable but we know that they are proved, and this is

my conviction respecting them. I have no more doubt regarding the truth of the record of miracles which we have in the Bible than I have concerning the presidency of George Washington or the rule of Queen Victoria.

JONAH AND THE FISH

Laying this general foundation, let us pause for one moment on the miracle of Jonah and the fish. I do not stop on the possibility of it. I know that naturally Jonah would have been suffocated inside of a few seconds and that he would have been digested inside of a few hours. This I know would be the order of nature, but the statement is that God prepared the fish and evidently God was preparing Jonah. Here was a man with a great opportunity of which he was likely most ignominiously to fail. His failure had already begun. He had run away from his duty. God said: "Nineveh"; he said: "Tarshish." God said: "Six hundred miles east"; he said: "One thousand miles west." God said: "Preach"; he said: "Hide." Here is a soul tragedy but this prophet, with all his human imperfections, nevertheless is really a prophet of God. He is human and imperfect, but he is sincere and he desires to be of use. How can he be cured of this natural fear and energized for this superhuman work? If

God would work a miracle for him, the thing might be done. God did work a miracle for him and the thing was done. So far as we can judge, he walked the streets of Nineveh with an unfaltering foot and with his face toward the skies. There seems to have been no tremor in his voice as he said, "Forty days, and Nineveh will be destroyed."

A SHORT, GREAT SERMON

What enlightened and energized the prophet, enlightened and terrified the people. From beggar to king, from king to beggar, those hundreds of thousands of people turned to God. Was it worth a miracle? If you had the power to work such a miracle for the purpose of accomplishing such a result, would you think it a judicious use of power? It was possible, it was probable and it is proved.

Our little journey through this Old Testament Gospel is concluded. To me it is inexpressibly joyous to see how, in this world with its suffering and sorrow, its miseries and shames, its good people who seem helpless to accomplish the things that they desire in this world, God acts and works; through the most unlikely means, through the most incompetent agents, accomplishing the large and wonderful results which gladden His heart and which gladden the

hearts of all honest men and women throughout the world.

As we part, let me ask the prayers of all who read these lines that I may not fail my Nineveh, and I will pray for you that you may not fail your's and God, who is able to educate in such wonderful ways, will care for us both and our Ninevehs will repent and be saved. God will be glorified, and we shall be glad.

THE END.

100992

Date Due

NOV 14 1970

DEC 12 1970

100992

BS	
1605	
B639	100992
AUTHOR	
Blanchard, C.A.	
TITLE	
An Old Testament gospe	
DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME
OCT 31 7	Ken Campbell
11-14	Reueus
NOV 28 70	Bruce h
3-15-79	Lionel

